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TBILISI STATE CONSERVATOIRE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER
FOR TRADITIONAL POLYPHONY

**GEORGIAN TRADITIONAL POLYPHONY:
MODERN TRENDS AND PERSPECTIVES
OF DEVELOPMENT**

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FROM THE EDITORS

The collection *Georgian Traditional Polyphony: Modern Trends and Perspectives of Development* is compiled by Georgian and foreign scholars using articles written for a project sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia in 2022.

Giorgi Donadze, head of the Anzor Erkomaishvili Folklore State Center and project director, proposed a partnership in implementing the project's academic portion to Tbilisi State Conservatoire International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony, for whom it was a great honor to participate in such an important project for Georgian culture.

The project consisted of two parts – some Georgian and foreign authors were selected in 2022, the studies of whom were included in the present collection.

Unfortunately, the project format did not allow for all foreign scholars working on the theoretical, as well as practical aspects of Georgian polyphony to be shown. Clearly, Georgian ethnomusicologists are also not fully represented.

It is impossible to cover all the problems modernity has thrown before Georgian traditional polyphony in a single collection. The present book introduces English-language readers to the views of article authors regarding the various challenges in Georgian ethnomusicology: Rusudan Tsurtsunia's and Tamar Chkheidze's (Georgia) article is devoted to the role of institutions in the safekeeping of Georgian traditional polyphony; articles by David Shugliashvili, Sandro Natadze, and Nino Nakashidze (Georgia) are presented on archival material dealing with Georgian traditional polyphony; the internationalization process in the study of Georgian polyphony is examined in Joseph Jordania's (Australia/Georgia) extensive essay; whereas the same process in performance is seen through the eyes of foreign ethnomusicologist Caroline Bithell (Great Britain). Some methods for teaching Georgian singing and chanting to foreigners are discussed in articles by Polo Vallejo (Spain), Frank Kane (France), Carl Linich (USA), John Graham (USA/Georgia), and Nino Naneishvili (Georgia); some studies by Andrea Kuzmich, a Ukrainian scholar living in Canada, and by Georgian ethnomusicologists Baia Zhuzhunadze, Maka Khardziani, and Teona Rukhadze are devoted to the problems of identity retention among migrants. The developmental trends of Georgian traditional polyphony in modern musical life are discussed in essays from Tamaz Gabisonia, Sopiko Kontrikadze, Teona Lomsadze (Georgia), and Nino Tsitsishvili (Australia/Georgia); whereas an article by Matthew Knight (Canada) is presented on Georgian polyphony as a cultural tourism product. We would especially single out a relatively new field for Georgian ethnomusicologists – computational ethnomusicology – pioneered and masterminded by the German scientist Frank Scherbaum and the research group he has put together, including Georgian ethnomusicologist Nana Mzhavanadze.

It is possible for the views expressed by some authors to be debatable, but we think, in all, the collection represents honest perspectives on traditional Georgian music as one of the unique phenomena of world music by Georgian, as well as foreign scholars.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1. THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS IN SAFEGUARDING GEORGIAN TRADITIONAL POLYPHONY

Rusudan Tsurtsunia – UNESCO and Georgian Traditional Polyphony8

Tamar Chkheidze – The Preservation of Georgian Polyphonic Chant and Singing in the Historic Past and Present.....22

CHAPTER 2. ARCHIVAL MATERIAL, THE DYNAMICS OF ITS RESEARCH AND REVITALIZATION IN THE PERFORMANCE SPACE

David Shugliashvili – Material Sources for the Sustainability of Georgian Folk Singing: Audio Recordings and Notated Manuscripts36

Sandro Natadze – Georgian Folk Songs in Georgia’s Archives50

Nino Nakashidze – Georgian Folk Songs in Foreign Archives.....61

CHAPTER 3. THE INTERNATIONALIZATION PROCESS OF GEORGIAN POLYPHONY IN RESEARCH AND PERFORMANCE

Joseph Jordania – Foreign Scholars on Georgian Polyphony74

Caroline Bithell – Georgian Voices Go Global: Foreign Performers of Georgian Polyphony and Georgian Traditional Music on the World Music Stage105

CHAPTER 4. MODERN METHODS AND APPROACHES FOR TEACHING GEORGIAN SINGING TO FOREIGNERS

Polo Vallejo – Georgian Music from an Orff-Schulwerk Perspective Ideas, Examples & Methodology.....124

Frank Kane – My Observations on and Methods for Teaching the Principles of Georgian Singing139

Carl Linich – Georgian Polyphony for Foreign Students.....151

John A. Graham – Teaching Georgian Traditional Chant to International Audiences163

Nino Naneishvili – Foreign Lovers of Georgian Polyphony: Interests and Peculiarities of Teaching.....181

CHAPTER 5. MIGRATION PROCESSES AND IDENTITY

Andrea Kuzmich – Traditional Polyphony Outside of the Homeland: A Comparison of Georgian and Ukrainian Cultural Expressions	190
Baia Zhuzhunadze – The Role of Traditional Music in the Georgian Diaspora’s Ethnic Identity Preservation (Per Examples of Diasporas in the European Union, Great Britain, USA, and Canada)	206
Maka Khardziani – The Problem of Cultural Identity for the Svan Ethnographic Group Within Internal Migration	217
Teona Rukhadze – Migration from the Mountains to the Lowlands – The Past and Present of Traditional Tush Music	232

CHAPTER 6. GEORGIAN TRADITIONAL POLYPHONY AND MODERN MUSICAL TRENDS

Tamaz Gabisonia – The Layers of Georgian National Music and Their Structural Elements.....	246
Sophiko Kotrikadze – Soviet Georgian Author Songs	257
Teona Lomsadze – Georgian Traditional Polyphony in the Folk-fusion Style	265
Nino Tsitsishvili – Fusion Trends of Traditional Georgian Polyphony and Modern Music from the Standpoint of a Georgian Ethnomusicologist Living Abroad	276

CHAPTER 7. GEORGIAN POLYPHONY AS A CULTURAL TOURISM PRODUCT

Matthew E. Knight – To the Village in Search of a Song: Polyphony and Tourism	286
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CHAPTER 8. COMPUTATIONAL ETHNOMUSICOLOGY OF TRADITIONAL GEORGIAN MUSIC

Frank Scherbaum, Sebastian Rosenzweig, Reza D.D. Esfahani, Nana Mzhavanadze, Simon Schwär, Meinard Müller – Novel Representations of Traditional Georgian Vocal Music in Times of Online Access	304
Nana Mzhavanadze – TONY vs Classical Transcriptions – The “Chekasio Ramsa” Dilemma (What do computers “hear” and what has computational ethnomusicology taught me?).....	322

CHAPTER 1

THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS IN SAFEGUARDING GEORGIAN TRADITIONAL POLYPHONY

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UNESCO AND GEORGIAN TRADITIONAL POLYPHONY

In 2001, traditional Georgian polyphony was declared a masterpiece of the intangible heritage of humanity by UNESCO, whereas it was included on the representative list of intangible cultural heritage in 2008.

This was the beginning of a new stage in the history of Georgian polyphony, although it must be said that Georgian polyphonic singing was already known by many music lovers from various countries in the 1970s, when Rustavi, founded in 1968 by Anzor Erkomaishvili along with his friends, still traveled the world under the moniker “The Russian Ensemble” and released vinyl records with works of unique Georgian polyphony. The first significant proof of this for Georgian society was a concert by the widely known Yamashirogumi Choir, founded by the distinguished Japanese scientist and public figure, Tsutomu Ōhashi, at the Tbilisi Opera and Ballet Theater in 1990. An exceptionally emotional evening turned into an indelible impression for the society in attendance – the choir performed the most complex works of Georgian polyphony learned from the Rustavi recordings with Japanese diligence and at the end of the concert, as a sign of support for the Georgian people’s fight for independence, even unfurled the Georgian national flag on stage.

It must be stated that for Georgians, singing is just as important a means of expression as language. This was called *gulis-tkma* (innermost desire – lit. speaking from the heart (trans.)) by Ilia Chavchavadze (Chavchavadze, 1986: 134), because it can express all human experiences – from joy to tragedy – all the while a part of existence from the birth of a new life to the end of life. Therefore, starting in the 19th century following the abolishment of statehood by Russia, great labors were expended in recording folk song and chant, along with the language, by Georgian society. From the onset of the 20th century and afterwards, when a part of the Soviet Union, the Georgians were able to preserve the life-giving force of traditional singing despite the ideological pressure. They managed to record almost the entire repertoire of all regions first with phonographs, then on tape reels, and finally with digital recorders, and create an immensely rich audio archive, which today has almost been fully copied onto digital media. This is the great treasury of the Georgian people that will be handed down to future generations as a unique heritage preserved through their historical, cultural memory.

But as a crucial international institution of culture and education, UNESCO’s recognition was a historical event for Georgian polyphony through which a new life began for this national musical, cultural phenomenon in the 3rd millennium AD and new perspectives unfolded before it.

UNESCO and the Convention of Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

Before I speak about UNESCO’s role in the safeguarding of Georgian polyphony, I think it is necessary to touch upon a few issues shedding light on how this organization arrived at the idea of the need to protect intangible cultural heritage and of having a special convention.

The concept of intangible culture worked out by UNESCO has its start in 1982 at the international MONDIACULT¹ conference in Mexico, which distinguished the concepts of tangible and intangible cultural heritage for the first time. A necessity for working out the conception was stipulated by international society acknowledging that as a result of the ever-growing process of globalization in the world, peoples of the world, especially people of developing countries (the people of Africa and Asia, first of all), may find themselves faced with the danger of intangible culture, or that created through sacred activities, easily vanishing.

It turned out that the Convention on the Safeguarding of World Cultures and Natural Heritage in 1972 only applied to tangible monuments, or artefacts made by a person from natural materials – objects, items, architectural structures, buildings, parks, human-designed landscapes; as well as material and monuments of the past uncovered through archeological digs in which a person’s creative talents are shown, responding to their aesthetic needs. A list of monuments was compiled by UNESCO, it kept track of monuments of member states included on the list, mandated their protection, and participated in their reconstruction and restoration itself. But since a human being is a material and spiritual being, they therefore create an entire system of living values covering tangible and intangible ones.

For one thing, the cultures of all the world’s peoples were either not represented or only partially represented by tangible monuments, and these monuments primarily subsisted through the centuries-long spiritual traditions of these people. Globalization, however, was first of all destroying these original traditions – societal relations formed over the centuries, artefacts of sacred activities such as languages, religious concepts and the rituals associated with them, singing and dancing, and various technologies handed down from ancestors. Not just new technologies, colloquial languages, and traditions were introduced in civilization’s developing countries (and not only in them), ways of life and societal relationships were radically altered, showbiz widely spread, foreign music became an inseparable part of everyday life, etc. Young people were especially greatly influenced by these things, whereas traditional intangible culture was quite vulnerable, the disappearance of which was facilitated by the natural reduction in those carrying it.

One of the achievements of MONDIACULT was a new definition of culture accounting for entire systems of human values, cultures created through sacred activities along with tangible culture, and the term “intangible culture” was first used to denote it. It is pointed out in the conference declaration that all cultures are unique, expressing a people’s identity, whereas traditions and various forms of expression are the best demonstrations of its existence in friendships among the world’s people. Here it was also noted that cultural identity is inseparable from cultural diversity and the foundation of world cultural pluralism is represented by their coexistence. Through this, MONDIACULT essentially defined a completely new and important direction for UNESCO’s future operation plans – caring for the safekeeping and promotion of the intangible culture of the world’s peoples and finding special forms to do this. It was also emphasized that the 1972 convention was only focused on tangible culture, which is much richer in developed countries, but not on such cultures which are mostly common for regions, where cultural

¹ https://culturalrights.net/descargas/drets_culturals401.pdf

energy is concentrated on different forms of expression, oral traditions and performance, for example.

The conference called on UNESCO member countries to expand the area of their cultural heritage and cover all forms of artistic expression, including folklore, oral traditions, and cultural practices.

The acknowledgment that **folklore is given the same sort of importance in defining an ethnos' cultural identity as language, oral traditions, beliefs, and other forms of expression** declared by UNESCO is quite important.

After MONDIACULT, an active movement was commenced in the world by UNESCO for safe-keeping and promoting folklore. In 1989, the organization accepted the recommendation of preserving traditional culture and folklore accounting for events developing folk crafts during the years 1990–1999, although it turned its attention to other currents of other traditional cultures, even conducting seminars to instill these events in everyday life. The declaration accepted in 1997 was exceptionally important, which revealed the beginning of a new program by UNESCO “Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity”. The goal of this program was to establish a new form of safeguarding intangible culture – recognizing the works of intangible cultures of various peoples as masterpieces, distinguishing them according to certain criteria met by the nominations presented by UNESCO member countries.

In 2001, the first list recognizing 19 examples of the intangible culture of humanity as masterpieces was published. Georgian polyphony was among them. The nomination prepared by Anzor Erkomaishvili, the great patron of Georgian folk music, was presented by the Georgian government, although it had to be brought up in accordance with UNESCO standards. Mrs. Natela Laghidze, Georgia's permanent representative in UNESCO in the 2000s, was actively involved in this. It is notable that this woman successfully collaborates with this organization to this day.

At the same time, A. Erkomaishvili was a member of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Commission and participated in examining the nominations presented from different countries himself. He had not taken any part in the voting process for Georgian polyphony, although he was the one to present it before the commission. The nomination was unanimously supported by the commission. It must be said that Mr. Anzor Erkomaishvili's personal charisma played a particular role in this. One of the most fervent supporters of Georgian polyphony was Dieter Christensen (1932–2017), secretary general of the International Council of Traditional Music (ICTM) at the time and professor of ethnomusicology at UCLA in the US, who, before his passing, was a constant participant of the first 6 symposiums held at Tbilisi State Conservatoire since 2002.

In the years 2001, 2003, and 2005, 50 elements were included on the list of masterpieces of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity. This meant that UNESCO was responsible for widely disseminating information concerning these masterpieces, on its own end, however, a country was responsible for especially looking after the protection and development of these elements. The grounds were prepared for UNESCO's 2003 “Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage” through this proclamation.

This convention started a new epoch, opening the way for international recognition of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity. The text was preceded by an introduction laying out the convention's pre-conditions, including which special importance was given to its foundation on the international legal acts

regarding the protection of human rights, and to noting that globalization presented an exceptional risk to intangible heritage in comparison to tangible culture. At this time there were no international legislative acts with any binding force regarding its safekeeping.

The most challenging task, in my opinion, was the definition of this complex, and in fact, elusive phenomenon right at the start of the convention: “Intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity”.

In the same spot, manifestations of intangible cultural heritage are defined:

1. Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage.
2. Performing arts.
3. Social practices, rituals, and festive events.
4. Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe.
5. Traditional craftsmanship.

One of the most difficult issues turned out to be a definition of the topic of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Clearly, its protection had to take place through completely different forms than for tangible heritage – traditional art that has been created over the centuries by generations and is alive even today, is anonymous. Really, there are some works, for example, in traditional Georgian polyphony that had been composed approximately a century ago by famous choirmasters, but they have already become a part of tradition.

Forms for the safekeeping of tangible monuments have been well known for a long time – restoring a monument, conservation, the government takes care of preserving the cultural space surrounding it. The conservation and restoration of ICH is impossible – the essence of oral tradition is in its living transmission, when it undergoes natural changes, even the commitment to its preservation forms by the ethnos (ancient intonational artefacts – for example, the cadential formulas of multi-dialectical Georgian polyphony, compositional structures that have taken shape over centuries, like the modulational layout of “Chakrulo” or Gurian trio songs) and hereditariness are its peculiarities that had been shaped by the International Folklore Council in the mid-20th century. According to the convention, only living art is traditional, even if it is not at all necessary for it to reckon many millennia, which is one of the distinguishing features of traditional Georgian culture. The mechanisms for the safekeeping of ICH are defined by the convention at the national and international level.

At the national level, the main mechanism of safekeeping ICH is the obligation of participating convention states to identify and inventory it, for this, a country must compile several regularly updated lists. The focus is on the importance of formal and informal education regarding ICH, the informed state of society, the usage of media and print channels for this, and the involvement of societal communities, groups, and individual people in these processes.

No less important are the international forms of safekeeping ICH offered by the convention:

1. A Representative List of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity which the committee compiles, updates, and publishes through proposals of the corresponding participating states.
2. A list of the intangible cultural heritage requiring immediate safekeeping. This list is also compiled by the committee per the proposals of participating states.
3. Programs, projects, and activities better expressing the convention's principles and goals and which through the same rule, are recognized by the committee as "the best practices".

International collaboration and assistance are also taken into consideration (including from donors), the aim of such assistance is explained – to help a beneficiary state in working out a strategy for the safekeeping of ICH, in planning out the work to protect one of the individual spheres or elements of ICH; to procure financial assistance, send specialists, etc. A beneficiary's obligations, their available budget, etc., must be clearly defined in a document worked out by the country and presented at UNESCO.

By the way, the UNESCO Convention has also gained some critics. One of them is Nino Tsitsishvili, a Georgian ethnomusicologist working in Australia, who published an article "National Ideologies in the Era of Global Fusions: Georgian Polyphonic Song as a UNESCO-Sanctioned Masterpiece of Intangible Heritage" in the journal *Music and Politics* in 2009. This convention's concept regarding the safekeeping of ICH is critically examined by her within it. Despite being, or because I was a UNESCO expert in 2006–2013, I have also thought many times about its concept of safekeeping. "An idealistic view of such a world made up of diverse cultures, who probably live in harmony and mutual respect by protecting global ethics and human rights", (Eriksen, 2009: 6) is certainly observed within it. Aside from this, UNESCO, which stresses the importance of the living practice of ICH, imparts a big role on its fixation, which at a glance, opposes living practices and the idea of folklore constantly changing. But unfortunately, this is the reality of modern life – no sort of convention will be able to pause the processes of societal life and technological development in the 21st century, the inseparable parts of which are represented by the manifestation of free human will and the immeasurably grown influence of the media.

The author of this article affirms that the Georgian population is multicultural and multiethnic, whereas UNESCO recognizes only one form of creative expression as the sole symbol of Georgian identity – Georgian polyphony. She writes that the ideas supported by UNESCO "coincide with the traditionalist and monoethnic tendencies of the Georgian ethnomusicological elite and culture workers and that a new ideological niche was found by long-term nationalistic cultural politics recognizing the superiority of traditional Georgian polyphony thanks to this declaration" (Tsitsishvili, 2009: 3).

Right off we must note that the UNESCO proclamation says nothing about Georgian polyphony being the sole expression of the Georgians' musical identity! Here, it is just pointed out that it is not just an achievement of the Georgians, but of all humankind.

It also must be stated that Georgian polyphony has had its own niche in Georgian society before the "the traditionalist and monoethnic tendencies of the Georgian ethnomusicological elite and culture workers" took shape within our country during the Soviet era. This is attested by processes taking place from the second half of the 19th century – the transcription of songs and chant into notation, the already mentioned essay by Ilia Chavchavadze in which he gives a typological characterization of Georgian

music and notes, that “the self-origination and originality” of the local polyphony are phenomena differentiating this music from Asian, as well as European music. The same thing is attested by the 1901–1915 recordings of the London Gramophone Company and the existence of numerous folk ensembles at the beginning of the 20th century, as well as the composition of an original version of the chants for *The Liturgy of John Chrysostom* (1910) and the opera *Abesalom and Eteri* (1919) – Georgian classical music works constructed on the unique intonation and harmony of the national polyphonic musical thought by the great Georgian composer Zakaria Paliashvili.

Therefore, I have attempted many times to elucidate whether Georgian polyphony expresses the Georgians’ national identity or not, as many scholars, including me, think, or as some opponents, especially “outsiders”² figure it does not express the identity of Georgian society as a whole; or what difference there is between Georgian society’s concern for traditional polyphony and its “nationalistic” aspirations. It’s true UNESCO calls on states to look after the monuments it has recognized, but through this convention the grounds were made ready for the 2005 Convention on “the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions”.

Another thing that is quite important is that knowledge about traditional polyphony all around the world was expanded by the Tbilisi symposiums starting in 2002, and now not only Georgians think that polyphony is a marker of our people’s musical identity (Arom, 2019; Bolle-Zeemp, 1997, 2001; Kawai et al, 2005; Nadel, 2010; Scherbaum, 2018, 2019, 2020; Tsutomu, 2003; Zemtsovsky, 2003). It is thought by foreign scholars that Georgians are a “people thinking polyphonically”, “homo polyphonicus” (Zemtsovsky, 2003), still for our multicultural society, the compatibility of national and other cultural musical experiences (this affects not only Georgians, but also other ethnic minorities living in Georgia) is a manifestation of the multiculturalism turning people into representatives of the modern age (Tsurtssumia, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014; Tsurtssumia, 2019, 2015).

² Western ethnomusicologists divide those studying ethnic music into “insider” and “outsider” observers – or as scholars observing from the inside or from without, the positions of whom from the standpoint of evaluating their own music and that of others are oftentimes different.

UNESCO and Georgia

To ascertain UNESCO's role in the endeavor of protecting and promoting traditional Georgian music, in my opinion, it is also necessary to point out how the implementation of this convention took place in Georgia. In 2007, the convention was ratified by the Georgian Parliament, for which only a few paragraphs were hastily added to the existing law – a definition of ICH itself corresponding to that of the convention (Ch. 1, Article 3 l/b), it noted that necessity of identifying it, documentary (audio-video, written) fixation, preservation, and safekeeping (Ch. 2, Article 5, m), a list of intangible cultural heritage objects and a national registry are created with the aim of registering and identifying the objects (Ch. 5, Article 1), certified by order of the ministry. All this was soon fulfilled: several lists were created which differentiated the statuses of ICH monuments and those of ICH national monuments. A monument's status already has 72 elements.³ Any of these elements can be put forward by the state in the list worked out for international assistance with UNESCO's ICH.

But the selection of ICH elements to be presented before UNESCO is approached with great responsibility by Georgia. Recognized as a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity in 2001, Georgian polyphony was the first to find itself on these lists, which in 2007 after the accession of Georgia to the convention, was transferred over to the Representative List by UNESCO itself in 2008. After this, in 2013 some monuments of national importance put forth by the government were included on UNESCO's Representative List: *Ancient Georgian traditional qvevri wine-making method*, in 2016 – *Living culture of three writing systems of the Georgian alphabet*, and in 2018 – *Chidaoba, wrestling in Georgia*.

This was a tremendous success, because despite any form of collaboration with UNESCO being quite beneficial for the country and culture, in my opinion, the inclusion of ICH elements in this list especially turned out to be important for these elements themselves: this is recognition of these traditional elements, presenting them to the world, propaganda. A series of color illustrated brochures with the corresponding explanations and definitions are published by UNESCO and knowledge is disseminated concerning them. Since 2008, 631 elements from 140 countries have been included in this list. This list is quite diverse, beginning with a tradition from one village or community and ending with traditions spread all over a region or country. It must be said that following Georgian polyphony, Georgia was honorably presented by the ICH elements selected from Georgia, as not only the homeland of grapes and wine, but as a country with ancient technologies for crafts and winemaking; an ancient Christian country alive to this day bearing the history of an alphabet with one of the most exceptional developments out of the 14 scripts extant in the world and unique traditions; and an ethnos with a strong spirit, deftness, distinguished by tolerance for defeated adversaries since old times. This evoked a great response. Our Georgian wrestlers – Olympic and world champions – were already well known. But after this recognition,

³ https://ka.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E1%83%A1%E1%83%90%E1%83%A5%E1%83%90%E1%83%A0%E1%83%97%E1%83%95%E1%83%94%E1%83%9A%E1%83%9D%E1%83%A1_%E1%83%90%E1%83%A0%E1%83%90%E1%83%9B%E1%83%90%E1%83%A2%E1%83%94%E1%83%A0%E1%83%98%E1%83%90%E1%83%9A%E1%83%A3%E1%83%A0%E1%83%98_%E1%83%99%E1%83%A3%E1%83%9A%E1%83%A2%E1%83%A3%E1%83%A0%E1%83%A3%E1%83%9A%E1%83%98_%E1%83%9B%E1%83%94%E1%83%9B%E1%83%99%E1%83%95%E1%83%98%E1%83%93%E1%83%A0%E1%83%94%E1%83%9D%E1%83%91%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1_%E1%83%AB%E1%83%94%E1%83%92%E1%83%9A%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1_%E1%83%A1%E1%83%98%E1%83%90

the popularity of Georgian qvevris and the traditional winemaking method increased all over the world, wine festivals are held in Georgia, it is gradually occupying a distinguished place in European-Asian, and American markets. Whereas in regard to the Georgian script, the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, which today contains up to 350 documents and collections, has been enriched by numerous ancient Georgian manuscripts, including the most important of all, ancient palimpsests.

As it has already been pointed out, in response to ICH monuments being recognized by UNESCO, the government takes responsibility for looking after their safekeeping, and accordingly, financing the necessary events for this. These responsibilities are defined in Chapter 3 of the convention (Articles 11–15). First of all, the government is obligated to work out and implement state politics protecting the ICH. With this goal and by considering these recommendations, a special department consisting of a few people was created at the Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation, which by the way, wrote up some quite intriguing documents within a very short time, including *Georgian Law Concerning the Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage*. It's true that this law was not ratified by Parliament, but some of its articles have been taken into account in *Culture Strategy of Georgia*.⁴ The work of this department at this agency was intensely underway in the years 2012–2018. Clearly, this work was hampered by the worldwide pandemic, but hopefully it will actively resume, still, I will remark here that in my opinion, it is desirable that human resources be increased in this sector of the agency, because this is no less a challenge than caring for and looking after tangible culture.

...

Now I will directly touch upon how UNESCO has helped Georgia in the promotion and safekeeping of traditional Georgian polyphony since 2001.

This support began immediately – in 2002, the director of UNESCO's ICH sector, Noriko Aikawa, visited the first International Symposium of Traditional Polyphony, which was quite representative – 47 delegates from 14 countries, including from the American, European, and Australian continents. This was the first loudly announced international academic forum in the world dedicated to polyphony and it had to be held once every two years. Here it must also be stated that in general, this theme first became the theme of the international conference at Tbilisi State Conservatoire in 1984. It was held on the initiative of Joseph Jordania, who had quite extensive international contacts for specialists of peripheral Soviet Union republics. These conferences, created only due to the critical economic and political situation, were paused at the Conservatoire in the 1990s and resumed in 1998.

The visit of a high-ranking UNESCO official was actually caused by a great fascination with Georgian polyphony.⁵ In the beginning, the astounding enthusiasm elicited by the audience at the gala concert opening the symposium and the participation of prominent ethnomusicologists from leading world countries in the symposium's academic sessions greatly impressed Noriko Aikawa. She announced for all to

⁴ <https://mes.gov.ge/publicInfo/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/%e1%83%99%e1%83%a3%e1%83%9a%e1%83%a2%e1%83%a3%e1%83%a0%e1%83%98%e1%83%a1-%e1%83%a1%e1%83%a2%e1%83%a0%e1%83%90%e1%83%a2%e1%83%94%e1%83%92%e1%83%98%e1%83%90-2025.pdf>

⁵ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/16p27GL2g0KGUDIRqlfQzcz2zKNICRtC5/view>

hear that UNESCO is supporting Georgia's efforts to preserve traditional polyphony and that this will continue in subsequent years (Aikawa, 2003). Symposium participants addressed a letter to Mr. Koishiro Matsūra, the general director of UNESCO, for him to support the creation of the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony at Tbilisi State Conservatoire (Appeal, 2003).

UNESCO paid attention to this appeal and in Georgia, specifically at Tbilisi State Conservatoire, during the years 2003–2006, implemented the project “Safeguarding and Promotion of Georgian Traditional Polyphony”. There is some brief information concerning it on the UNESCO website:

Polyphonic singing is a popular tradition that used to pervade all areas of everyday life in Georgia, ranging from field work to songs for curing illnesses and Christmas carols. There are three types of polyphony in Georgia, each performed in a different region.

The project enabled not only the promotion of research and documentation on traditional polyphony, but also its transmission to younger generations. The Research Centre on Traditional Polyphony (RCTP) produced a number of publications, organized training courses for collectors, teachers and students of polyphony and created an audio-visual inventory of traditional Georgian polyphony. An international symposium under the patronage of the president of the Republic was held to raise awareness of Georgian traditional polyphony both inside and outside the country. It also helped to develop exchange and cooperation with various international organizations, institutes, associations and universities studying folk music.

To date, seven Youth Folk Song Centres have been established in different Georgian provinces. At each of these centres, an elderly master ensures the transmission of the local polyphonic tradition to about ten young people for each Centre.⁶

\$166, 178 was set aside by Japan Funds-in-Trust to implement this project, out of which \$70, 000 was used to finance choirmaster schools in the regions: compensation for pedagogues and songmasters, including Andro Simashvili, Polikarpe Khubulava, Islam Pilpani, Tristan Sikharulidze, and scholarships for their students. This endeavor was managed by Anzor Erkomaishvili, through his support local municipalities continued to finance these schools in Kakheti, Samegrelo, and Svaneti even after the project, whereas a krimanchuli school was opened in Guria. Much work went on behind the scenes of this quite modest information, which was reflected in its accompanying official summary description from UNESCO.

It is noted in this description that the UNESCO project made it possible to found the International Center for Traditional Polyphony at Tbilisi State Conservatoire, outfit it with the necessary computer and audio-visual equipment, create the Center's website (www.polyphony.ge), the establishment of the Center's bulletin (now published electronically), conduct 10 field expeditions, work on an electronic database of Georgian folk songs and upload it on the site, translate 19th and 20th-century Georgian academic works on Georgian folk songs, and create and publish the first English-language collection and Georgian folk singing textbook. Together with the Georgian Ministry of Culture, the second symposium in 2004 was co-financed by UNESCO.

⁶ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/projects/safeguarding-and-promotion-of-georgian-traditional-polyphony-00005>

It was no simple thing to implement this immense project, in which numerous Georgian folklorists were involved and specialists invited. Extensive information concerning the work done and detailed financial accounts were permanently requested from the Conservatoire by UNESCO (project coordinator – R. Tsurtsunia), but the work done by the newly established center was highly appraised by UNESCO, thereby marking the beginning of long-term collaboration.

The success of the international symposiums on traditional polyphony was significantly decided by this support – since 2002, 11 symposiums have been prepared and conducted by the International Center for Traditional Polyphony of Tbilisi State Conservatoire, with the 11th most recent symposium in 2022 being dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the founding of this massive forum.

As previously pointed out, the practical dissemination of Georgian polyphony in various countries began in the 1970s, foreign performance ensembles of Georgian polyphony began visiting in the 1990s. But in fact, international scientific circles theoretically had no knowledge of traditional Georgian polyphony. Before then, there were only Dimitri Arakishvili's works in Russian and one study belonging to the Austrian anthropologist Sigfried Nadel. After the transcription of Georgian songs⁷ recorded by German scholars at WWI German prisoner camps into notation, Nadel was the first to express the idea that Georgian polyphony is of local origin, because he had not come across anything similar anywhere else, neither in the surrounding Caucasus, nor in Armenia and Byzantium (Nadel, 2010). But an interest in Georgian polyphony from foreign scholars was especially kindled after the establishment of the International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony in 2002 at Tbilisi State Conservatoire and distinguished ethnomusicologists and researchers visit Georgia once every two years. At the last 11 symposiums, scholars from various countries have presented papers on Georgian polyphony before a Georgian and international audience – from Japan (Tsutomu Ōhashi and a group of scholars), America (Izaly Zemtsovksy, Stuart Gelzer, Matthew Arndt, John Graham), Canada (Andrea Kuzmich, Matthew Knight), Great Britain (Caroline Bithell), France (Simha Arom, Frank Kane, Florent C. Darras, Michèle Castellengo), Spain (Polo Vallejo), Germany (Susanne Ziegler, Frank Scherbaum, Meinard Müller, Sebastian Rosenzweig). It is not difficult to find their studies on the internet, including in collections of symposium papers uploaded on the IRCTP website (www.polyphony.ge).

Clearly, everything previously mentioned would not have been, had it not been for the UNESCO recognition in 2001. This support continues even now – along with the International Center of Art, IRCTP is participating for a second time in the Erasmus+ program bringing together all the Eastern European countries having had their polyphony recognized by UNESCO.⁸ A project associated with the gudastviri will begin in 2024 through this same program. Whereas in 2022, a remarkable collection was published by Tbilisi State Conservatoire IRCTP through financing from UNESCO: *Women's Role in UNESCO-Recognized European Traditional Singing Practices*, in which are presented 13 women authors on Bulgarian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Portuguese, and Georgian women performers.⁹

⁷ <http://polyphony.ge/en/echoes-from-the-past-georgian-prisoners-songs-recorded-on-wax-cylinders-in-germany-1916-1918/>

⁸ On October 22, 2022, the IRCTP of Tbilisi State Conservatoire and the Folklore State Center of Georgia hosted large groups of guests from Latvia, Estonia, North Macedonia, Italy (Sardinia), and Portugal through this project.

⁹ <http://polyphony.ge/category/publications/our/>

By the way, the foundations were laid for my collaboration with UNESCO, first as this project's coordinator, and then as a Georgian representative, through UNESCO's first project (2006-2008) – in 2008 I was an expert of Croatian *ojkanje* singing and put forth a nomination for it to be included on the Representative List at the UNESCO ICH Committee meeting, whereas in 2009–2013, I was a member of the ICH consultation council, which provided recommendations to nominations presented at UNESCO from all around world for including ICH in various lists. This was tremendous experience giving me the opportunity to become more familiar with this practice and participate together with the National Heritage Agency of Georgia in preparing Georgian nominations presented at UNESCO.

It must be said that UNESCO's collaboration and the influence of the Convention for the Safekeeping of ICH on the Georgian government is not only limited by this – the country responded to the recognition of Georgian polyphony with diverse and large-scale events – the establishment of the international symposium at TSC beginning in 2002, and the IRCTP in 2003, and the reorganization of the Georgian Folk Art House created in the 1930s into the Folklore State Center in 2004 and promoting it. This was followed by the founding and creation of the Chant University by the Georgian Patriarchate, and mainly, the universal spread of the folklore movement throughout the country.

The work of the State Folklore Center and the Chant University, in the spirit of the 2003 UNESCO Convention, a subject for separate study.

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THE PRESERVATION OF GEORGIAN POLYPHONIC CHANT AND SINGING IN THE HISTORIC PAST AND PRESENT

Introduction

Concern over the protection and preservation of traditional Georgian polyphony manifests itself in various forms, intensities, and strengths in the history of our country. Therefore, the historical and cultural contexts of the functioning of traditional polyphony are considered in the work with emphasis on the role and importance of religious, family, and educational institutions in Georgia's historical past and present at the local and international levels. By accounting for traditional polyphony being represented by two tributaries (folk and professional music) in Georgia, the different environments of the functioning of traditional folk and professional music are defined, and therefore the strategies of societal representatives, the church, or state institutions dictated by an awareness of losing the chant and folk singing traditions within various historical periods are discussed. The place and role of George Mtatsmindeli Chanting University in relation to the protection, preservation, spread, and popularization of traditional Georgian polyphony is highlighted within this context.

The uniqueness of traditional Georgian music was confirmed by the recognition of traditional Georgian polyphony by UNESCO. A plurality of ensembles performing traditional Georgian music abroad, statistically holding the #1 spot in the world, must be explained by its special allure. This benchmark of international interest in Georgian folk and old professional music was decided by the efforts of various institutions within Georgia in relation to the popularization of traditional folk and professional music at the local and international levels.

Concern for traditional Georgian music is revealed in a document from the cultural realm regarding the State policy of Georgia "Culture Strategy 2025", which was officially adopted through Resolution #303, on July 1, 2016, by the Georgian government. The elaboration and setting in motion of new mechanisms aimed at protecting, preserving, developing, and popularizing traditional music arts are taken into account in the strategic courses of this document, as well as in the specific tasks section (cultural heritage). This indicates that traditional Georgian music, singing, and chanting have become objects of special concern with respect to government institutions.¹

¹ Aiming to facilitate the popularization of Georgian culture, Georgia is implementing a grant program "Supporting Georgian Dance and Song Ensembles Abroad", which is focused on the functioning of Georgian dance and song ensembles working abroad and their subsequent development.

Traditional Georgian Music – The Practice of Music making, Family Traditions, Creative Art Ensembles, and Informal Teaching

Two branches of traditional Georgian music – folk music and church chant – are affirmations of the national identity and retain this importance even today. These two tributaries of our traditional music had different areas in which they functioned in living practice. Chant was a part of liturgical rituals, whereas singing was a companion of the Georgian way of life. Due to the different cultural spaces (the folk lifestyle and church services), the directions and paces of development of the singing and chant traditions, external influences, as well as dangers opposing the existence and spread of the traditions, and correspondingly, the work of Georgian figures or institutions within Georgia to protect traditions, were not always equally proportionate.

Traditional art is based on the labors and lifestyles of a person. Through it the people's artistic values and ideals are mirrored, and the creative potential of the country is reflected especially clearly within it. Traditional art has its own course of natural development, distinguished by abilities to restore, and develop itself, and by creative freedom. Traditional Georgian music is an expression of the Georgian people's highly developed musical thought and creativity through folklore or liturgical music works.

Folk music making was an inseparable part of life in Georgia accompanying a Georgian person every day. Megrelian mourning rituals, a collective process of millet hoeing accompanied by work songs, and travel and table songs are described in the accounts of foreign travelers in the 17th–19th centuries (Lamberti, 2020; Jacques Francois Gambart, 1987). The crucial role of handing down the mastery of singing to the next generation belonged to the domestic music tradition. Informal teaching in a domestic environment represented a natural form of preserving and developing the folk singing tradition. It is known that singing was considered a privileged thing to do among musical dynasties in Georgia. A good singer was valued and enjoyed respect among the people. Due to their care of protecting tradition, singing families “tried to marry from a family of singers so their progeny would inherit musical talents. When a woman was married off, people were interested in the groom's musical qualities, and if they were known, the groom's authority grew in the eyes of the woman's relatives” (Erkomaishvili, 2015: 197). Thus, in the old days, folk singing had the people as loyal “protectors”.

Beginning in the 17th century, an era of Persian cultural hegemony began in the history of Georgia. The palace language was Persian. Georgian nobles gradually became accustomed to and adopted Persian luxury, customs, decorations, and entertainment. The influence of Persian music is strongly felt at the royal court, in aristocratic circles, and life. These influences did not affect contemporary Georgian folk music and church chant, although some dangers of losing the music tradition were brought about by foreign cultural expansion. Calls by Georgian public figures to arouse the people were stipulated by an awareness of these dangers. Aleksandre Jambakur-Orbelian's address to the people in the 19th century is imbued with such pathos: “Georgians! Stand up against the noisy racket of the Qizilbash, and raise your hands against their songs. What compares to the sound of our ancestral singing, which has been our sound for all these thousands of years”. The author sees a way to save tradition by transcribing songs into notation: “Whoever brings these voices together and writes them down in notation as one shall be worthily remembered forever! They will become a part of history, to be seen by all”! (Orbeliani, 1861). Public

figures and erudite musicians took up concern for saving folk singing. The transcription of folk songs into notation and publication of collections began in the 19th century. Over time, folk singing lost its function through urbanization and technological progress. Apart from this, songs were transferred from everyday life to the stage through the arts festivals that were a mainstay of the Soviet period. Songs about the Party, government, Lenin, Stalin, and “being outwardly national and inwardly socialist” (Beria, 1936: 30–45) were composed for the arts festivals, generations were raised. Folk singing was studied less by children and youth during the communist ideology period. In the 1970s, a strategic step was taken toward saving Georgian folk singing by Anzor Erkomaishvili, the great patron of traditional Georgian song and chant: “I especially wanted and realized that the young people had to learn folk singing. Therefore, in the 70s, when Rustavi was already a distinguished ensemble, I decided to create a children’s choir. I wanted us to make children fall in love with folk singing” (Erkomaishvili, 2019). The formation of the Martve Ensemble was an intentional step towards saving traditional Georgian singing. By creating the Martve and Bichebi ensembles, Anzor Erkomaishvili practically implemented his own idea: “If you want to save singing, you must teach it to the children” (Erkomaishvili, 2019). The work of young people “having taken wing” in Martve is evident: “If there are any good, successful ensembles anywhere, children’s and adult – this is all due to Martve” (Erkomaishvili, 2020).

From the standpoint of establishing the authentic performance of folk singing on stage, Edisher Garakanidze has an immense role. The importance of the young men’s ensemble Mtiebi, the Amer-Imeri folklore studio for young children, as well as the Mzetamze Ensemble established by E. Garakanidze in saving authentic performance within the Georgian folk music making tradition, is remarkable. This tradition fortunately continues through the work of various creative ensembles.

It must be noted that along with the singing tradition brought back to life on stage, the practice of domestic music making ensembles is pertinent today in Georgia. This is confirmed by the abundance of ensembles participating in family ensemble concerts held through the symposiums organized by the Tbilisi State Conservatoire International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony and in folklore evenings organized by the Folklore State Center in recent years.

A long-term project implemented by the Folklore State Center is exemplary on the way to protecting Georgian singing and chanting and preserving traditions – the opening of Folklore Center representatives (traditional music schools) in various Georgian regions. This smart step initiated by the Folklore Center is the continuation of an idea brought to fruition through a UNESCO project at Tbilisi State Conservatoire by Anzor Erkomaishvili in 2003–2006. Study at regional branches of the Folklore State Center is free and takes place through a program written up and guidance from the same center. From 2015 to the present there are 30 such schools open in various Georgian regions.² In order to receive certification, graduates take an exit exam at the Folklore State Center. Most traditional music school graduates go on to study the same discipline at Chant University, where young people get a higher academic education focused on traditional music. The second section of the article is devoted to the history and operations of

² 1. Ozurgeti 2. Kvareli 3. Ambrolauri 4. Oni 5. Lentekhi 6. Mestia 7. Poti 8. Tsalenjikha 9. Zugdidi 10. Abasha 11. Senaki 12. Samtredia 13. Khoni 14. Vani 15. Baghdadi 16. Sachkhere 17. Kharagauli 18. Zestaponi 19. Gori 20. Kaspi 21. Borjomi 22. Akhaltsikhe 23. Batumi 24. Kobuleti 25. Shuakhevi 26. Tianeti 27. Telavi 28. Dusheti 29. Kvareli 30. Karbi.

Chant University, its place and role in the endeavor of preserving and popularizing traditional Georgian music, where there will also be an account of the path of chant as a professional art full of obstacles and challenges to its development.

Georgian Church Chant as a Professional Art and the Importance of Formal Study

In contrast to folk singing, chant is a professional art. Chant is part of the liturgical ritual and therefore was significantly dependent on church rites and developed within the framework of different types of regulations. The cultural space in which chant functioned clearly had an effect on the formation process of Georgian chant – ecclesiastical chant took shape in contrast to traditional folk music, but at the same time, as a musical phenomenon conveying the norms of Georgian musical thought. The peculiarities of chant, those of teaching, handing down, and developing the links constituting the liturgical system were defined by the needs of liturgical practices and the orientation of the Georgian Church. Therefore, caring for chant has represented a prerogative for church hierarchs and institutions since olden times, and in comparison to folk art, as a sphere of professional education, was characterized by formal study.

Several decisions by secular and ecclesiastical hierarchs were of landmark importance in the history of Georgian chant. The roles of David the Builder, Erekle II, and Catholicos Anton II, and the bishops St. Aleksandre (Okropiridze) and St. Gabriel (Kikodze) were exemplary in the endeavors of developing, protecting, and spreading the Georgian chant tradition.

The return to Palestinian-Syrian liturgical practices and the formation of Gelati and Ikalto Academies, where music was also studied, are associated with the name of King David the Builder. Having connections to the restoration and strengthening of the Georgian chant tradition, the work of Erekle II and Anton II³ is exceptional, resulting in “the old chant blossoming once again and spreading to all regions of Georgia”. (Karbelashvili, 1898: 70) Whereas the roles of bishops St. Aleksandre and St. Gabriel are invaluable in the task of saving chant. In the first two cases, the task of formal study in protecting and spreading traditional chant was decisive, because chant represented a form of professional art. After liturgy on October 1, 1764, Catholicos Anton opened a hierarchal council attended by King Erekle, where in accordance with one of the passed resolutions (regarding putting together choirs for hierarchical cathedral), the Svetitskhoveli Catholicos School was formed. According to some info from Polievktos Karbelashvili, “Up to 300 young men studied theological and philosophical subjects, geography, arithmetic, including chanting, in Mtskheta. Every student composed iambics in honor of the king, Catholicos, and other prominent individuals. And Catholicos Anton gave them examples”. (Karbelashvili, 1989: 70)

King Erekle himself was an exemplary chanter. He is known for his patronage and generous charity shown to chanters and their families for their labor in illuminating the holy churches with the chant – some land and a mill for Solomon the Chanter of Martkopi, and for a serf of Svetitskhoveli, nobleman Otar the Chanter. The corruption of Georgian chant by Zakaria Gabashvili was followed by King Erekle’s wrath. “He (Zakaria) began to mess up the chant, he muddled up the sound of things being said in Georgian and the words, too, by inserting Persian words”. Because of this, the king punished the

³ The opening of the Tbilisi Theological Seminary in 1755, and of the Telavi Theological Institute in 1758 are associated with his name, upon the basis of which a theological seminary was later founded in 1782.

priest and exiled him from Kartli (Karbelashvili, 1989: 74). King Erekle's well-known address to Bishop Ambrosius of Tsilkani (later of Nekresi), where he requests Ambrosius to come to town and teach the Matins Alleluia is motivated by concern for Georgian chant. Care for protecting and preserving the tradition worked out in the Georgian liturgical practice is clearly seen in the king's testament appended to the Pentecostarion published in 1868: "We have checked this Pentecostarion with the Greek one in the presence of the Greek Ioane Ksiphilinos, a kindred believer attending the hierarchical council educated in his own language and trained in Georgian writing, and he agreed to everything. Nothing more or nothing less, and since you wanted to, each of you checked the Greek Pentecostarion with the Georgian one and were convinced. Some kontakia and ikoses had been changed from the old Georgian Pentecostarion, to be in accordance with the Georgian Church, since they were set to heirmois and elaborated upon. We have written some things under this book and placed both before [you], accept the one you deem suitable. King Erekle". The nullification of the Georgian Church's autocephaly during the reign of Erekle was followed by the closure of the opened seminaries and an intentional struggle against traditional Georgian chant began. Still, the ecclesiastical hierarchs (Bishops St. Aleksandre Okropiridze and Gabriel Kikodze) took on the task of saving chant. With the formation of the "Committee for Restoration of Georgian Chant (1860, Tbilisi; 1884, Kutaisi), the foundation was set for the long-term process of transcribing Georgian chant into notated form to save it. Through the labors of hierarchs and clergy members with participation from representatives of the last generation of chanters, Philimon Koridze, Ekvtime Kereselidze, and others, this glorious endeavor came to a conclusion, thereby saving and helping unique works of chants survive to the present day.

Apart from the church realm, chant was also bestowed with special importance among the Georgian elite. It is corroborated through historical facts that in the upbringing and education of Georgian noblemen a crucial place was given to the study of Georgian church chants (heirmois). From an early age, a young person had to take part in the art of chanting. Because of this, "it was difficult to find a prominent family in Georgia that didn't know how to chant" (Khundadze, 1911). "...The princes and nobility of Imereti, even the women, considered it shameful to be ignorant of chant" (Machabeli, 1864: 49–73). There is naturally nothing unusual regarding the mastery of chant in information preserved in historical sources about church figures, or in works of ecclesiastical literature. But emphasizing the knowledge of chanting in praise of secular individuals indicates that not only was the mastery of Georgian chant considered especially honorable, but it also attests to the important place of Christian hymns in the education system. So, for example, when characterizing Mzechabuk⁴, the author of a Meskhan chronicle⁵ notes that "the patron Mzechabuk... completely literate and knowledgeable of chant and... had a splendid voice" (Javakhishvili, 1990: 153). The example of Nikoloz Baratashvili will also help us in picturing the importance of chant in raising noble youths. Becoming a creative source of inspiration for the poet's poem was the heirmos "The Seas of Life are Stirred Up". According to Zurab Chavchavadze's justified remark, Baratashvili had known this heirmos since a young child, especially since the poet had not been

⁴ Atabeg of Samtskhe Atabeg in 1500–1515.

⁵ One of the important sources of Georgian history contains information about the Samtskhe Atabeg and the political history of neighboring countries.

enrolled in a school until 10 years of age and was receiving an education at home (Chavchavadze, 1993: 19). It is known that in Georgia even during the time after Baratashvili, the study of heirmois still does not lose any importance in educating the youth. Some information found as the result of an expedition conducted in Zemo Imereti, in 1935, and cited in I. Javakhishvili's work, regarding Vasil Tsereteli and his cousins having specially summoned some chanter named Svireli to teach chant, is yet more proof that in Georgia, "in the old days, the knowledge of heirmois was considered one of the conditions of a domestic upbringing". (Javakhishvili, 1990: 76).

The establishment of a Soviet dictatorship declared another battle against chanting and Christianity. Not only was chanting restricted, but also liturgical practices and participating in rituals. Thus, old Georgian professional music's natural chain of development was broken, still chant works managed to be saved by being transcribed into notation. A new life for chants kept at the Georgian National Center of Manuscripts began in the 1980s through the initiative of a group of students from Tbilisi State Conservatoire – to bring old Georgian church chants back into liturgical practice. With this goal, the creation of the Anchiskhati Choir turned out to be a powerful stimulus for the formation of other choirs. This crucial endeavor still represented the initiative of a private group despite the appearance of followers, and in the end, the Church, Holy Synod, and the Patriarch-Catholicos of Georgia again took responsibility for saving and caring for Georgian chant. At a council on August 18, 2003, it was decreed by the Holy Synod of the Georgian Church: "Georgian church chant has occupied a most important place in the life of the people and the Church, and it will stipulate its spiritual, moral, and cultural development. Like language, a people's chanting represents a crucial means of expressing originality. Stemming from this, we declare based on historical traditions that polyphonic Georgian chant was and is canonical chant in the Georgian Orthodox Church. Fulfilling this is mandatory in all Georgian churches and everywhere where church services are done in the Georgian language". The next step was the founding of a higher institute of chant, thereby creating solid guarantees for the protection of the art of traditional Georgian singing and chant, and new perspectives of development.

The Founding of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chanting University and Its Role in Protecting Traditional Music

In 2006, through the blessings of His Holiness and Beatitude, Catholicos-Patriarch of all Georgia, Archbishop of Mtskheta-Tbilisi, and Bishop of Bichvinta and Tskhum-Abkhazia Ilia II, George the Athonite Chant University was founded, and its doors opened to future generations. The creation of the institute was spearheaded by Archimandrite Ioane (Kikvadze) of Mama Daviti Monastery and Anzor Erkomaishvili, the great patron of Georgian folk singing and chant. This great national endeavor was supported by Ivane Chkhartishvili, a businessman in admiration of traditional Georgian music, through the efforts of whom it became possible to form the institution per the blessings of the head of the Georgian Church.



Founding of Chant University. September 19, 2006

With the founding of Chant University, a new stage began of looking after and supporting Georgian church chants. In the beginning, the institution functioned as an offshoot of the Tbilisi Theological Academy. Today, however, it is an independent organization – an authorized institute of higher education⁶, where studies are ongoing at the bachelor's and master's level. Here, students acquire mastery of two specialties appropriate to this realm – at the bachelor level; they get qualified to be choirmasters of traditional choir, whereas, at the master's level, they are certified as musicologists. The bachelor's program is more geared towards the performance of church music, whereas the master's program is focused on sacred musicology and research, having an academic research profile.

Following 2006, the university underwent a great and fascinating journey. At present, Chant University is the sole institution in Georgia fully focused on the protection, preservation, and popularization of traditional music. Apart from its studies, the university is also distinguished by diverse activities, with these activities being connected to its mission and strategic tasks. Significant university tasks are the development of Orthodox Church musicology research and of the performance and creative arts, the fundamental study of the prominent phenomenon of Georgian culture – ecclesiastical chant and traditional music and popularizing and integrating them within the world cultural space. To implement these tasks, the university creates optimal conditions for study, teaching, and research using modern technological,

⁶ Protecting tradition through the form of handing down practical knowledge (through teaching singing and chanting).

informational, and communicative means, and is called to deepen ties with international partners. Projects carried out through support by the Georgian Chanting Foundation significantly increased awareness of the university in Georgia, as well as beyond, resulting in joint projects with the world's leading universities. Notable from this aspect is the collaboration and student exchange project with Notre Dame University (Indiana, USA), being implemented per their initiative. On May 25, 2022, a historical memorandum was officially carried out with the Vatican's Pontifical University, thereby opening wide the doors of our university and Georgian singing and chanting to the world.



The signing of the memorandum with the Vatican's Pontifical University.

Recognized, highly qualified experts in the field are active at Chant University, which is extremely crucial for achieving the learning outcomes foreseen by the educational programs. Academic and invited personnel are busy with active academic, pedagogical, and creative lives. It is remarkable that through the support of scientific and chertfoundations (Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia and the Georgian Chanting Foundation), many academic projects have been implemented and are currently ongoing, textbooks, CDs, monographs, and conference materials have been published through the university, and public informational lectures have been prepared online.

Ongoing or planned creative, methodical, academic, or institutional projects by academic personnel and students implemented by the university deserve to be noted. These forms of activity are focused on the protection, preservation, and development of traditional Georgian music; on awakening an interest in traditional music arts in the younger generation and increasing awareness regarding the importance

of the Georgian musical tradition. Chant University administration is actively involved in this process: the rector – Archimandrite Ioane Kikvadze and the administrative director Nana Gotua. Projects initiated and supported by them create opportunities for the practical realization of the university’s strategic development plan.

The university’s collaboration with the State Folklore Center of Georgia must be singled out from the partner organizations. Graduates of the traditional music schools founded across Georgia through the Center’s organization continue their studies at the University and are equipped with the knowledge and skills to be choirmasters and precentors, return to their native regions to pursue pedagogical and creative activities, frequently being employed at the schools where they themselves began the professional study of traditional Georgian chanting and singing. The loopback for which the University came into being is already evident – university graduates return to their own regions and continue their professional careers at traditional music schools. A continuous chain focused on teaching and studying traditional music is created by this model and it considers the perspectives of preserving and developing the singing/chanting tradition.

Boys’ and girls’ groups, a recording studio equipped with modern technology, and a library with book and audio funds are currently functioning at the university. Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the University’s choir had a widely active concert life, which was restricted due to the pandemic. Currently, baccalaureate and master’s students are involved in local academic conferences; student ensembles are busy with various creative projects and competitions. They participate in prestigious concerts in Georgia and abroad.

The creative relationship between the university and various Georgian municipalities has gotten significantly stronger in recent years. A memorandum with the Kutaisi Union of Cultural, Art, and Educational Institutes was officially enacted with the aim of deepening collaborations with regions. The assistance of traditional Georgian singing and chant representatives in the village became more active through the university’s student resources – student projects were carried out in Achara; expeditions were conducted in Kakheti and Kartli.

We are shown through the university’s 15 years of activity that the expectation reflected in His Holiness and Beatitude, Catholicos-Patriarch of all Georgia Ilia II’s speech during the blessing of the university building on September 19, 2006, “We are starting something quite big. I am certain the choirmasters we are raising will create choirs all over Georgia, through whom all of Georgia will glorify the Lord”, has already been met. Most university graduates continue their creative careers in traditional music choirs, whereas pedagogical activities are continued at the choirmaster schools founded by the Folklore State Center. At this stage, the important mission taken on by the university can be said to be successfully implemented.

The university is further strengthened by the support of state institutions, which retains the status of one of the main educational institutions in the sphere of traditional Georgian music from the standpoint of handing down knowledge, protecting tradition, and popularization. This is because it is called to fulfill a leading role in Georgian Orthodox church services, in the universal restoration and establishment of centuries-old traditional Georgian church chant and singing.

The university has the appropriate infrastructure, a library, and a music studio where unique audio

releases are prepared. This institution is focused on development and the assistance of state institutions on this path is evident. Through a resolution by the Georgian government a building already undergoing renovation located on Chubinashvili Street in Tbilisi was bequeathed to the university. The university will soon have a new building equipped with restored infrastructure further increasing the effectiveness of implementing its plans.



A model of Chant University's new building.

Helping with student employment is also important for the university. Through the assistance of the Georgian Chanting Foundation, several Chant University students were in Western European dioceses (Italy, Belgium) starting in 2006 within a student employment project, where they taught traditional singing and chanting to Georgian emigrants, whereas they provided consultations for choirs already existing within parishes. 80% of the pedagogues at Folklore State Center choirmaster schools are University graduates.

Chant University is fulfilling its own mission: serving the development of Orthodox Church musicology research and performance-creative art, the fundamental study of Georgian culture's unique phenomenon – church chant and traditional music and popularizing and integrating it within the world cultural space.

If we take one more look at the topics reviewed in the article, several factors of landmark importance motivated by saving traditional singing and chant in the history of Georgia can be singled out: the opening of the catholicos school and seminaries (end of 18th century) through the reform implemented by King Erekle and Catholicos Anton, the fight to save Georgian chant oppressed by Russian expansion, the formation of the committee to restore chant (end of 19th c.) ending with the notation of a gigantic corpus of chants, the founding of the Martve Ensemble in the 20th century, and the establishment of Chant University in the 21st century.

If a decisive role was played by the formation of the Martve Ensemble in saving folk singing, starting in the 1980s, a special contribution was made by the Anchiskhati Choir from the standpoint of returning traditional chant to liturgical practices and spreading it. Whereas at the institutional level, the creation of Chant University in 2006 must be considered a fact of strategic importance, which took on the task of saving the tradition of Georgian chant. The type of formal teaching that accompanied old Georgian professional music and was used within the Georgian chant tradition at educational centers⁷ associated with churches and monasteries, and then at theological seminaries, was lost by Georgian chant along with the abolishment of autocephaly and was only regained a century later. Responsibility for saving and looking after the chant tradition was again taken on by the Church and the Georgian Patriarch through the creation of a higher education institute of chant. For more than 15 years, Chant University has worthily served the protection of our national music treasure and popularizing it in Georgia and beyond. There are many challenges facing the focus on development and through support and help from the Georgian Patriarchate, government, and Ministry of Education and Science, the University continues to serve Georgian singing and chanting, care for and support a centuries-old treasure, and hand it down to future generations.

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⁷ Gelati Academy (11th c.), Ikalto Academy (11th c.), later Davit Gareji Monastery (17th c.), the Svetitskhoveli Catholicos School (18th c.).

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CHAPTER 2

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL, THE DYNAMICS OF ITS RESEARCH AND REVITALIZATION IN THE PERFORMANCE SPACE

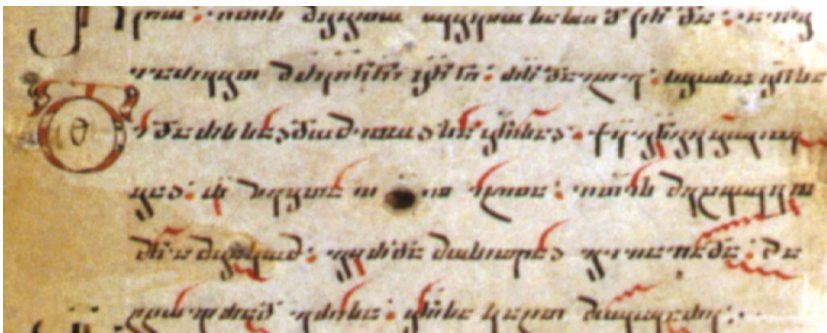
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MATERIAL SOURCES FOR THE VITALITY OF GEORGIAN FOLK SONG: AUDIO RECORDINGS AND NOTATES MANUSCRIPTS

The history of recording traditional Georgian music spans over a millennium. This pertains to the neumatic musical system in Georgian hymnographic manuscripts, with the earliest examples dating back to the 10th century (ex. 1). Despite the existence of extensive ancient neumatic collections, concrete discussion on the musical aspects of Georgian chant can only be based on works notated in the European 5-line staff system in the 19th century.



Naturally, folk, or secular music, alongside chant, served as an active form of creative expression in ancient times. However, its transcription using any musical system is not attested until the 19th century. Like in other European countries, folkloristics as an academic discipline began to take shape in Georgia during the 19th century. The term “folklore” itself was only introduced in 1846 by the English writer William John Thomas (1803–1885). The foundations of Georgian musical folkloristics, or ethnomusicology, also began to emerge towards the end of the 19th century. Dimitri Arakishvili (1873–1953) is widely recognized as its founder. It is worth noting that chronologically, Georgia closely aligns with the emergence of this musical-academic discipline in Europe.

The invention of the phonograph, an audio recording device, by Thomas Edison (1847–1931) in 1877 brought about revolutionary changes in music history and, among numerous developments, created a landmark impetus and opportunity for the recording and preservation of ethno-music. Only 24 years after the appearance of the audio recording device did it make its way into Georgia in 1901 and folk singing was recorded for the first time. This marks the beginning of the creation and supplementation of the Georgian phonograph archive. This process was promoted by the rapid popularization of the phonograph, and then of the gramophone, as well as by periodic visits from foreign recorders to Georgia, soon followed by the debut of gramophone records containing Georgian recordings released by the Gramo-

phone Company. Shortly thereafter, Georgians themselves began field work using phonographs, with the early efforts led by Georgian composers. This is evidenced by the folklore expeditions conducted by Dimitri Arakishvili, Zakaria Paliashvili, Niko Sulkhaniashvili, and others. Unfortunately, the wax phonograph cylinders recorded during these early expeditions have not survived to the present day.

Still, quite large and significant collections of wax phonograph cylinders recorded between 1923 and 1952 have luckily survived to the modern age and are stored in various archives within Georgia. These collections include expedition materials of Dimitri Arakishvili, Shalva Mshvelidze, Sergi Zhghenti, Shalva Aslanishvili, Tamar Mamaladze, Aleksandre Partskhaladze, Grigol Chkhikvadze, and Vladimer Akhobadze. Through a collaboration of Tbilisi State Conservatoire International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony and the Vienna Phonogrammarchiv, in 2006–2008 these recordings were compiled and released as 16 CDs accompanied by a catalog. The release is titled *Echoes from the Past – Georgian Folk Music from Phonograph Wax Cylinders* (Tsursumia, ed., 2006–2008).

The phonograph was soon replaced by the tape recorder as audio technology advanced. Therefore, wax cylinders were substituted with magnetic tape reels. This innovation extended the duration and frequency of recordings, signifying a new stage in the history of the audio fund of Georgian national music.

From the late 1940s, the Folk Art Department of Tbilisi State Conservatoire and its laboratory were particularly active in creating and enriching the audio archive of folk songs. A list of folklore musicians, including Grigol Chkhikvadze (1898–1986), Vladimer Akhobadze (1918–1971), Otar Chijavadze (1919–1998), Edisher Savitsky (1919–1972), Mindia Zhordania (1929–1979), Kakhi Rosebashvili (1930–1988), Kukuri Chokhonieli (1940–2004), Edisher Garakanidze (1957–1998), and others, is clear proof of this. The expedition material collected and preserved by them represents a crucial archive for the history of Georgian folk singing from the late 1940s to the late 1980s.

Through his dedicated labor, Anzor Erkomaishvili, the great patron of the national musical treasury, searched out the original sources of early Georgian phonograph recordings in archives all over the world. Previously, these recordings were a rarity in Georgia, existing primarily as a few scarce copies of gramophone records. By releasing this treasury in a new format, Erkomaishvili made the first invaluable Georgian music recordings, preserved on gramophone records from 1901–1914, accessible to the general public (Erkomaishvili, 1986; Erkomaishvili, Rodonaia, 2006).

“Almost all researchers of Georgian folk music share the belief that authentic musical folklore is nearing its demise in Georgia”, Edisher Garakanidze writes in 1996 (Garakanidze, 2007: 18). Today, with only a handful of elderly master singers who possess an old-fashioned authenticity still among us, it is natural, given the existence of a rich audio archive, that archival phonograph recordings have become the primary source for both the practical and scientific study of Georgian folk music. This stands to reason, as the phonograph recordings provide a unique ability to capture, record, hear and perceive the sound of music with all its peculiarities. Thus, a universal thesis must be recognized: today, the main treasury of national folk music culture is represented by old audio recordings. Through their scientific and practical study, we have the opportunity and direction to preserve endogenous musical and linguistic characteristics, as well as performance peculiarities of our national tradition.

It must be observed that until the 1980s, the transmission and teaching of song melodies, of each

voice to ensembles (choirs) in so-called secondary performance, or stage practice, was generally carried out directly by choirmasters (sometimes with the assistance of sheet music), or, alternatively, ensembles would copy the repertoire and new performance styles of leading collectivists of the time: Georgian State Ensemble of Song and Dance, Shvidkatsa, Gordela, and Rustavi. In frequent cases, these new styles deviated from the authentic manner of performance.

In this respect, a fundamental breakthrough began in the 1980s, initiated by the ensemble Mtiebi and its director Edisher Garakanidze. Expedition material recorded in villages, audio recordings of songs performed in a natural environment by elderly singers were selected by him as the main source and focus for learning songs and performance. Following Mtiebi, the ensemble Mzetamze and the Anchiskhati Choir also pursued the same principle and methodology. Well-forgotten melodies, original modal harmonies, authentic performance styles, and the overall natural quality hidden within the expedition audio recordings proved to be the precious ore that many ensembles have sought after ever since.

Despite the great endeavors implemented to this day in finding and preserving old audio recordings of folk songs, as well as the growing interest and more intensive research in this area, it is apparent that such materials in nearly all archives still need to be fully inventoried and identified, thereby bringing numerous works to the public's attention. The time has truly come to understand that these archival audio recordings represent the main tangible artifacts for preserving a treasury of global significance, a trove recognized by UNESCO as a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity.

Another essential resource for the research and study of Georgian folk singing is notated manuscripts, the history of which begins in the 19th century. In contrast to Georgian chant, where the largest portion of the material, comprising thousands of examples, is only found in the form of notated manuscripts, in the case of folk songs, audio recordings far exceed notated works.

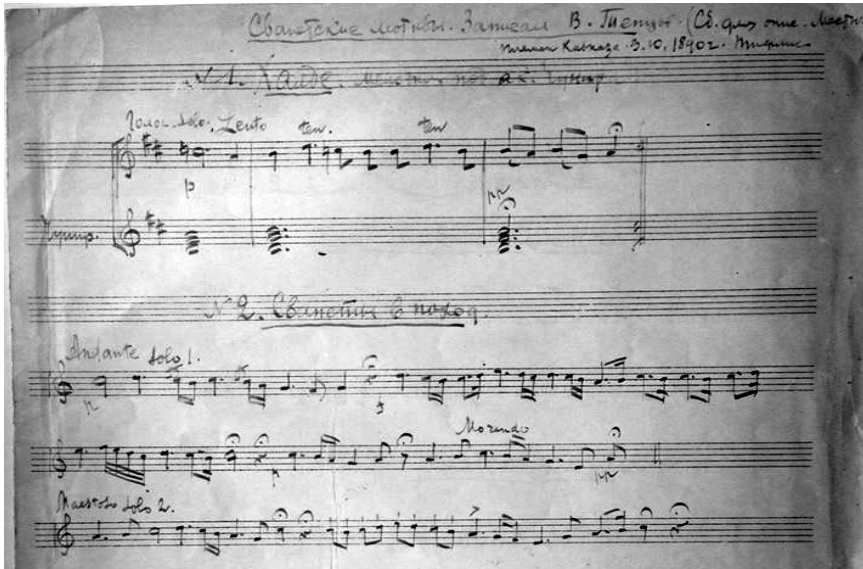
I believe this topic should regain relevance in contemporary Georgian ethnomusicology. Furthermore, the skeptical attitude towards notated manuscripts in the realm of performance must be discarded. Disregarding notated transcriptions would be as much of a mistake on part of scholars and practitioners alike, as the one made over decades concerning thousands of chant transcriptions.

In connection with this topic, the following questions are of interest:

- When does the history of transcribing Georgian folk music and songs into notation begin?
- What discovery possibilities are provided by the early notated transcriptions?
- What importance and use do notated transcripts of folk music have, especially those created before the introduction of the phonograph in Georgia?

In order to answer these questions, it became necessary to find old manuscripts. With this goal in mind, I addressed various Tbilisi archives where 19th century notated transcriptions of Georgian folk music might possibly be located; specifically, I visited the National Archive of Georgia, National Center of Manuscripts, Tbilisi State Conservatoire, Folklore State Center, and Art Palace (I still have not had access to the archives of other cities or collections of private individuals). Most notated manuscripts of Georgian folk music that I was able to see at these archives, are dated to the 20th century, or are not

dated at all. For example, the oldest date encountered in notated transcriptions kept at the Folklore State Center was 1900, although the collection in which this date is noted (manuscript #842), is of a later time. Thematically, many of the songs therein reflect the Soviet reality, and moreover, they often date back to 1928. The notated manuscript material stored at the Tbilisi Conservatoire Folklore Department is also only dated to the 20th century. For the time being, a small number of notated manuscripts from the late 19th century was uncovered at the National Archive of Georgia, but according to recent data, out of the aforementioned archives, the Art Palace turned out to have the oldest dated notated transcriptions so far (I say “so far” because comprehensive research is yet to be conducted in this respect). Here, in the Manuscript and Archival Document Fund, specifically in D. Arakishvili’s archive, a manuscript of Svan songs notated by V. Teptsov is kept (see manuscript #914, ex. 2), dated to October 9, 1890.



Still, the transcription of folk songs into notation having begun years earlier is attested by notated collections of folk songs published in Georgia, the history of which begins in 1878 (see Kutsia-Ghvadze, 1947) (it should be emphasized that a year after the appearance of Edison’s phonograph, we were only just beginning to publish notated transcriptions of folk songs.). In particular, the first such collection is *Voices of the Homeland*, the author and compiler of which is Mikheil Machavariani. This is the same M. Machavariani who was selected as the first transcriber of chants into notation by the Committee for the Restoration of Chant formed¹ in 1860, although his work did not yield favorable outcomes, due to which the process of recording chants was temporarily paused (this endeavor was later carried out by Philimon Koridze). Similar to the case of chant, M. Machavariani’s collection *Voices of Motherland* (see Machavariani, 1978), which, to say in author’s own words, includes “folk songs to be sung by children”,

¹ The Committee for the Restoration of Chant was put back into operation under the leadership of Bishop Aleksandre in 1878, which before then had been headed by Bishop Gabriel in 1860, although at that time the committee was unable to do much of anything due to various obstacles.

gives rise to many questions concerning the modal, intonational, or rhythmic accuracy and correctness of the transcribed music. Despite this, the collection still offers some fascinating material from a historical, as well as musical and textual standpoint. The collection contains 20 songs, including old traditional works, alongside newly composed songs with European harmony. As an example of an old piece, I present to you the first song of the collection, “Tamar mepe” (“Queen Tamar”) performed by students of the Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Higher Educational Institution of Ecclesiastical Chant (ex. 3, audio ex. 1).²

Handwritten musical score for "Tamar mepe" (Queen Tamar). The score is written in Georgian and includes vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Moderato". The title is "თამარ მეფე" (Tamar mepe). The score is divided into three systems. The first system has three staves: a vocal line for "კრინი" (Krin), a piano accompaniment for "მბოლო ბანი მოძახილი" (Mbollo bani modkhalili), and a vocal line for "ბანი" (Bani). The second system has two staves: a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The third system has two staves: a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are in Georgian and describe Queen Tamar's reign and her church.

The recorder had chosen a duple meter (2/4) instead of a triple meter (6/8) for this circle dance song. A cadential turn, in which the first voice joins in a unison with the other voices through the leap of a fourth, captures one's attention. This cadence is not unusual, but it must be stated that it appears with remarkable frequency in the early notated transcriptions of folk songs.

Apolon Dzamsashvili's (Tsamtsiev) manuscript *Notations of Children's Songs*, kept under the number H-785 at the National Center of Manuscripts (Dzamsashvili, manuscript H-785), is attributed to the same period, although the manuscript does not bear any date. This collection has been examined in an

² The audio examples were done in 2016 and recorded at the same university's newly opened recording studio. Participants: Giorgi Gordeladze, Nikoloz Shanshashvili, Davit Tsertsvadze, Nodar Japaridze; director – David Shugliashvili. Sound director – Ilija Jgharkava.

№ 23. დიამბეგის ქალს აჭებენ. (მონასტრულს კილოზედ). 23

ღანჯალ.

დი - ამ - ბე - გის და - ქალს ქალს ა - ჭე - ბენ - და - გა -

გად-მოს-დგე - ბა - ლა - ა - ი - ა - ვო - და ბან - ზე - და - ო.

იმას იმის რძალი სჯობდა
ფეხს მოიდებს გვერდზედაო.
ფეხის თითებს ათამაშებს
ოჭროს ხალიჩაზედაო.
ცალი თვალი ჩემზედ დარჩა
ცალი დიამბეგზედაო.

Apart from a general harmonic connection to the Karbelashvili mode, some voice leading patterns, strange to folk singing but quite characteristic of chant, are found within the song, particularly sixth and octave chord parallelism. The final couplet of the song fully matches the melodic turns of the ending verse to “Ghvtismshobelo Kaltsulo” (Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos), a vespers chant in tone 6, sung in the Karblashvili mode. The only difference lies in cadential figure, which ends on a unison D in the chant, whereas it is on a fifth, C–G, in the song. We can consider that in the form of this song, a phenomenon similar to the so-called “Salkhino” (festive) chant common in Western Georgia is also attested in Eastern Georgia, implying the use of the chant melody in a non-ecclesiastical, non-liturgical fashion. From this standpoint, this song is indubitably unique.

In addition to such original works, some songs known to us from various phonograph recordings also appear in the notated transcriptions, but here we find different versions of these songs. As an example, I present to you a song deciphered from a phonograph by Dimitri Arakishvili, included in a collection published in 1906 *Georgian (Kakhetian and Kartlian) National Songs Recorded on Phonograph* (Arakishvili, 1906: 8). This song is the famous “Beri katsi var” (ex. 7, audio ex. 5). In contrast to the usual versions, here the middle voice is the one that starts. When the choir joins in, the upper voices jumping down a fourth and the threefold repetition of the words “nu momklam” (“don’t kill me”) are unusual, seemingly giving the song a more intense, dramatic effect. Such elements are not found in any other versions of this song.

№ 8. ბერძ კაწი ვსრ. Я СТАРЬ.
(ქართულად. Карталинская).

Adagio. Allegro non troppo.

1) Эти два четверки немного скорью.

Above, we mentioned the Karbelashvili mode, and it should be noted that along with the chants, manuscripts of the brothers Vasil and Polievktos Karbelashvili also include notated transcriptions of folk songs. In one manuscript, Vasil Karbelashvili lists songs that were supposedly part of the Karbelashvili family repertoire. Among them are numerous songs with no equivalent in any notated or audio recordings. These include “Eso meso, mindors gamagdeso”, “Dela dela, kurdgheli da mela”, “Mivel da vnakhe samotskhis sakhe”, “Ananur kori aprinda”, “Glova mepis Irakli Meorisa”, “Agre iare mtskhetamde”, and many others. In all, the titles of 107 songs are listed.

It is noteworthy that even the well-known songs are presented in the manuscripts with some variant alterations from a textual standpoint. Serving as an example of this is a healing song titled “Tsiav nana, vardo nana, tsiav naninao” (manuscript #306–5). The lyrics of this song contain verses not encountered in any other works known to us.⁴

⁴ “The rose and violet are sick, tsiav naninao,
The lords have come here, iav naninao,
Seven brothers came out, iav naninao,

From a musical perspective, variant alterations are also found in notated works, an example of which is Vasil Karbelashvili's manuscript of the song "Aprindi shavo mertskhalo" (ex. 8, audio ex. 6) (manuscript #264), with the first word of the song differing from its universally known variant.



It is made evident by the cited works that notated transcriptions, whether in manuscript or published form, provide an opportunity to discover fascinating works with no equivalents in audio recordings.

Most of the cited examples, as you have seen, were not manuscripts, but instead material selected from early Georgian published notated collections. The reason for this is a lack of chronologically older manuscripts of Georgian folk songs, or more precisely, the fact that they have not been found and brought to light. It is a fact that a full inventory and systematization of early notated transcriptions of Georgian folk songs, not abroad, but within Georgia, have still not been duly conducted, which must be considered work of urgent importance for Georgian ethnomusicologists today!

Still, which notated transcript of Georgian musical folklore is the earliest? I would like to share an interesting fact regarding this matter.

They erected a camp on the seaside, iav naninao,
 They came and lodged in this region,
 They were settled here quite peacefully,
 With joyful chonguris, burning sugared walnuts,
 They met these lords with a song,
 They took good care of the sick person,
 Didn't take in anything hot and steaming,
 Not one of the lords got crippled,
 They all went flying out joyfully on their way,
 Let the Supreme One bless your journey and path,
 Tsiav nana, vardo nana, iav naninao”.

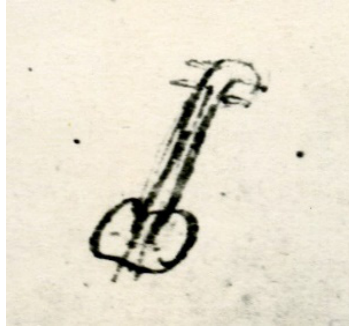
In my dissertation *Georgian Chant Schools and the Eight-Tone System*, I presented the earliest notated work of Georgian chant, specifically a manuscript of an heirmos to the Theotokos “Open My Mouth”, dated to the year 1802. It was transcribed by Metropolitan Eugene Bolkhovitinov of Kiev, whereas the one transmitting the chant was a Georgian bishop visiting him (later the first Georgian exarch), Varlaam Eristavi. The chant is notated in this manuscript in the so-called Kievan notation. The original copy of the manuscript is kept in the Manuscript Fund of the National Library of Kiev, whereas a photocopy is stored at the State Museum of Georgian Literature (manuscript N1106).

Interestingly, in the case of the oldest notated transcription of folklore, we again must address Eugene Bolkhovitinov’s manuscript, because like the chant, the oldest known notated transcription of a secular Georgian song also belongs to him and is dated to 1802. In particular, the song presented in this notated manuscript is set to one of the couplets from the poem “Sevdis baghs shevel” by Besiki (written in Russian transliteration) (manuscript N1106. Ex. 9).



According to a comment made by the transcriber, the song’s intonation is intended to follow a Persian style. The same seems to be indicated by a graphic illustration of an instrument resembling a tar at the bottom of the manuscript (ex. 10), but the melody presented in the notation appears to be a synthesis of European functional music and Georgian folklore elements. While this song does not represent an example of a traditional Georgian village folk song, it still holds the distinction of being the earliest notated transcription of an urban song composed in the Georgian language. Surprisingly, the song has

not received much attention, when at a minimum, it deserves to be appropriately studied as a historically significant piece.



After becoming familiar with the works discussed above, I would like to present a kind of classification of the documents featuring Georgian folk songs:

- Sorted into the first group will be songs with only titles or lyrics having survived to the present. Seemingly nothing can be said regarding a song's musical aspect, but in reality, observing the text, studying and analyzing its various aspects, can still be a source for obtaining specific information from a musical standpoint.
- The second group includes notated transcriptions that a transcriber has copied directly from something sung by a singer or notated from memory without any audio recordings.
- The third group includes notated transcriptions of songs that have been transcribed using audio recordings, although these audio recordings have not survived to the present. These songs can be conditionally labeled as "audio lost".
- And the fourth group includes songs with both notated transcriptions and audio recordings. It should be emphasized that within this group, there may be notated transcriptions and audio materials that haven't yet been compared or identified. Many such examples are likely to exist. Conducting this comparative work is necessary and urgent, because it is the combination of audio recordings and notated transcriptions that provides the ideal opportunity for directing the practical performance and the academic research of musical folklore.

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Please see the QR code for audio examples



GEORGIAN FOLK SONGS IN GEORGIA'S ARCHIVES**Foreword**

Working in an archive is one of the most adventurous undertakings, at the same time it is somewhat like detective work, and this is mostly the case. There is an immensely intriguing story behind each work connected to other stories, with all these links creating an endless chain and upon finding a new link you delve even further into vibrant histories relegated to the past.

Everything was started in 1901 by the English Gramophone Company, which had opened a Caucasian affiliate in Tbilisi and was recording Caucasian folk languages and music on Gramophone records, including choirs performing Georgian folk songs, famous singers, and instrumentalists. The interest in Georgian music at an international scale grew in stages and samples of Georgian musical folklore were recorded by foreign musicians and collectors. This was followed by the founding of various institutes or centers of higher learning in Georgia, which commenced with active expeditions all over Georgia. Most of the expedition material gathered by foreign scholars and collectors, due to some objective reasons, has been dispersed in various countries, although from this standpoint, the material kept in Georgian archives is in no better shape. This is because the material has reflected the instability of our country's recent history and much of it has been scattered, with some of it even being deemed lost. A large part of the material has been saved for us through those professionals and people totally in love with this endeavor, those who, despite innumerable obstacles, looked after this material and preserved unique works of Georgian folk singing to this day.

Due to the scope of the present article, it is clear that the conditions of all the archives in Georgia where material concerning Georgian folk singing is kept cannot be fully reflected. Therefore, I attempted to do an article on the institutions most notable for the diversity, amount, and significance of the material.

I selected 4 archives based on this principle:

- The National Archives of Georgia
- Vano Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire Ethnomusicology Laboratory Archive
- Ivane Javakhishvili Ethnology and History Institute Archive
- Folklore State Center Archive

Still, here it must be pointed out that there are dozens of archives, museums, and institutions storing unique material on Georgian folk singing for our country's history in Tbilisi and other Georgian regions.

First of all, from the standpoint of the amount and diversity of the material, I want to start things off with the National Archives of Georgia, which was founded in 1920. Today, the following departments function at the archives: The Central Archive of Audio-Visual and Film Documents, The Central Historical Archive, The Central Archive of Contemporary History, and the Literature Archive.



The National Archive

Most of the material on Georgian folk singing is kept in the Audio-Visual and Film Documents Archive, especially phonograph recordings, where more than 7,000 audio recordings of Georgian folk singing are stored. These recordings have been done using various mediums such as wax cylinders, Gramophone records, magnetic reel tapes, vinyl records, cassettes, and CDs. Unfortunately, not all the material has been digitized, although this process is ongoing at a steady pace. Here it must be noted that the wax cylinders were fully digitized in 2006–2008 through the Voices from the Past Project implemented by the Tbilisi State Conservatoire Traditional Polyphony Research Center. Out of the wax cylinders kept at the National Archives, I must single out the song “Suliko” recorded in 1939, and performed by Varinka Tsereteli, the author. This performance was thought to be lost.

Expedition recordings by Grigol Chkhikvadze, Shalva Aslanishvili, and Eugene Gippius are kept in the Phonograph Archive, which are also kept in St. Petersburg at the Russian House of Literature (The Pushkin House). Some archival audio recordings stowed away due to instability in the country are also found among the recordings from different institutions; for example, the Conservatoire had transferred dozens of expedition recordings to the National Archives in order to protect them. Along the same lines, the audio archive fund of the Museum of History of Georgian Jews was stored temporarily at the National Archives. Recordings held in the Phonograph Archive have been collected from private archives personally donated to the archive by the families. But, for institutions during the time of the Soviet Union, it was mandatory for record releases to be entrusted to the National Archives. Therefore, there is quite a bit of Radio Committee material in the Phonograph Archive. There are some cases when the Archive personally purchases private archives, the prices of which are determined by specially created commissions.

In contrast to the Phonograph Archive, comparatively less material for Georgian folk singing is kept in the Film Archive where documentary and art films, newsreels and segments shot during various years are kept. Like the Audio Archive, much of the material here has also not been digitized. Since the technical challenges of digitizing video material are comparatively more difficult than audio material, here the process proceeds at a slower pace, although there are some editing journals where video clips are verbally described in detail. It must be stated that there is quite a bit of material where Georgian folk songs, the debuts of various choirs, Vladimer Erkomaishvili's anniversary concert, etc., are portrayed. Hopefully, these will certainly be digitized soon.

Important events taking place in Georgia during the Soviet period were reflected in the newsreels periodically broadcast at different times. Cultural segments featuring Georgian folklore, folk singers, and choirs were frequently in newsreels. From this standpoint, I would highlight the newsreel "Soviet Georgia #6", where some unique shots are shown of how Artem Erkomaishvili attended a concert dedicated to the founding of the Gordela Ensemble in the Conservatoire's Recital Hall. There are numerous documentary films devoted to folk singing, shots of various folk celebrations are especially remarkable where some extraordinary examples of folk singing performed in everyday life are shown. Clips portraying amateur arts festivals held during various years, Georgian culture days in different countries, and ten-day art events are kept by the Film Archive.

As interesting the material associated with folk singing kept in the Photo Archive is, it also causes much sorrow, because it is difficult to work with the Dmitri Ermakov or Giorgi Nikoladze photograph collections kept at the National Archives, where various shots of round dances and songs are shown, and not look at a silent photo with regret. Researchers working in the photo archives often find themselves in such a state, because there is a great number of photos showing folk singing in the archives. Despite the material in the Photo Archive not being fully digitized, this process is technically much easier than digitizing audio and film, therefore photo digitization proceeds at a faster pace.

The photographic material starts from the 19th century, where photos from private collections were primarily gathered. Starting in the 20th century, the photographic material of various institutions begins to be entrusted to the National Archives. There is a tremendous amount of material in the Photo Archive where amateur arts festivals held during various years are shown. It is an unfortunate fact that documents from the Audio-Visual and Film Archive have not been studied by any professionals up to this point. There is a plethora of information needing clarification, especially that having to do with the photo and video material, where it is necessary to establish the identities of those shown on the reels in a timely fashion.

Private collections of individuals working at various institutions and in different fields after 1921 are primarily kept in the Literature and Contemporary History Archive. Private archives of note are those of Shalva Aslanishvili, Razhden Khundadze, Maro Tarkhnishvili, and others. You can also access the Folk Art House (now the Folklore Center) archive within this same archive, which contains many previously unknown and intriguing facts. Through the Cataloguing Archival Folklore Material project, we stumbled upon Giorgi Svanidze's – a collector and choirmaster of Kartl-Kakhetian songs – 3 unpublished volumes of Kartl-Kakhetian songs in the Khelovneba Publishing fund, which were ready to be published, but were not printed due to various reasons. We encountered this and many other pleasant surprises while working in the

The Central Archive of Literature and Contemporary History. Regrettably, this material had not been known to any professionals, thereby further attesting to the fact that there are funds still not studied by any scholars.

The History Archive is a fund depository where personal archives and various State Department funds dating to 1921 are kept. Since we are experiencing a lack of antique historical sources for Georgian folk singing, there isn't much material about Georgian folk singing in the History Archive. Still, even here I will reiterate that the funds require study by professionals since there are funds containing an abundance of information due to their content. For example, here there is the Viceregent Chancellery Fund consisting of thousands of cases and it is easily possible for some documents concerning folk singing to be kept within it. The Society for the Spreading of Literacy Fund is kept in the Historical Archives, containing material about Vasil Karbelashvili, Lado Aghniashvili, Meliton Balanchivadze, Dimitri Arakishvili, Zakaria Paliashvili, Pilimon Koridze, and other public figures involved with Georgian folk song and chant. Some correspondence the Society had with Dzuku Lolua is also found in the same fund, where he is mentioned as a book vendor in Sokhumi. Working in the Historical Archives is much simpler than working in the other ones, since interested individuals can electronically access a listing of funds kept at the Archives, as well as specific cases described in these funds. Whereas, if someone has a desire to look up a case, it is already necessary to go to the appropriate location.

The National Archives departments, on certain occasions, keep material unknown to this day to a wider audience, including academic society, about which I will repeat once again that it is imperative for complex work to be conducted, funds and cases to be known in better detail, and all material to be fully digitized so the material in our country regarding Georgian folk singing might see the light of day. I am confident you will find yourself face to face with many pleasant surprises when working on material kept in the Archives!



Vano Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire

The history of Vano Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire (TSC) spans more than 100 years. At its founding, per the initiative of Zakaria Paliashvili, the faculty of Georgian Folk Music and Church Chant was established in 1917, which quite soon abolished and dozens of years later, the Department of Georgian Folklore took shape in 1946 (Andriadze, 2004). The Conservatoire Archive is the unequivocal leader when it comes to the number of expedition recordings of folk songs. Despite Georgian folk music not having a separate office or department until the year 1946, collection work begins in July of 1927 when the first expedition to Zemo Svaneti takes place through the initiative of Dimitri Arakishvili, the rector of TSC at the time, and Larisa Kutateladze, the pro-rector, with expedition members being Prof. Larisa Kutateladze, Shalva Mshvelidze, and Shalva Aslanishvili. Grigol Chkhikvadze was supposed to have gone in place of the latter on the expedition, who was unable to travel for various reasons, after which Larisa Kutateladze took along Shalva Aslanishvili instead.

You can view several photos depicting the first Conservatoire expedition in 1927 at the National Archive of Visual Documents. Unfortunately, the first expedition material represents a tremendous loss for the TSC Ethnomusicology Laboratory Archives, having been deemed lost. Apart from the Zemo Svaneti expedition recordings, some audio recordings done on phonograph of a group of Svans visiting Tbilisi after the same expedition are considered lost. From TSC, Dimitri Arakishvili, Grigol Chkhikvadze (whose name was later given to the TSC Ethnomusicology Laboratory), Shalva Mshvelidze, Shalva Aslanishvili, Vladimer Akhobadze, Otari Chijavadze, Kakhi Rosebashvili, Mindia Zhordania, Kukuri Chokhnelidze, Edisher Garakanidze, Natalia Zumbadze, and Ketevan Baiashvili pursued expedition work in various periods. Selfless labor was exerted during the Conservatoire field expeditions, since starting in the 1940s, when expeditions were actively taking place, the technological means were not very developed and expedition members had to lug around quite heavy recording equipment in order to go to villages and record tradition bearers. Otari Chijavadze was exemplary from this standpoint, who despite having health problems, went around the highlands and lowlands, in good and bad weather, with quite a large load of recording equipment. Otari Chijavadze is notable for his abundance of expedition material.

The primary space in the TSC Ethnomusicology Lab Archives is held by the audio recordings, with a small amount of photo and video material as well. Written documents, however, cover expedition diaries, and handwritten works on folk singing or chant. As for the Audio Archive, there are recordings on wax cylinders (like at the National Archives, the TSC Archive wax cylinders were also digitized in 2006–2008 through the *Voices from the Past* project), magnetic tape reels, vinyl, gramophone records, cassettes, and CDs. The Folklore Department is equipped with a machine able to read magnetic tape reels. Because of this, private collectors frequently turn to the Conservatoire for digitizing their material, resulting in a certain amount of private collections also being found in the Archive apart from expedition recordings.

Throughout history, the TSC Folklore Department has collaborated with various institutions, such as Niko Berdzenishvili's research institute (with a project digitizing the archive material having recently been finished in association with the creation of a database. Dir. Nino Razmadze), together with whom the Conservatoire organized joint expeditions to Guria and Achara. A portion of Tamar Mamaladze's expedition material from the Institute of Ethnology and History Archives being digitized in the 2000s by Manana Shilakadze is the result of mutual collaboration. While working on this article, I made a pleasant

discovery when I met with Mrs. Ninuli Nakashidze, an employee at the Ethnomusicology Lab, and found out that they had 34 vinyl records with unknown recordings on them. The vinyl records were digitized by the Folklore Center and material from the Institute of Ethnology and History was found on them, particularly Tamar Mamaladze's 1952 expedition recordings in Zemo Achara. Due to the Folklore Center and the Institute of Ethnology and History mutually working on a project to digitize the Institute's musical fund, the joy of this discovery was two-fold. Some magnetic tape reels from Georgian Radio and kept at the TSC Ethnomusicology Archives are also the result of collaboration, according to the annotation, 2,239 audio clips are recorded on them.

Once again, I want to focus on the shortcomings of the Conservatoire Archives. It was previously mentioned that the first expedition recordings are deemed lost. As of today, Grigol Chkhikadze's archive represents the greatest setback for the Conservatoire. He preferred working from home, and in fact, kept his work material stored at home in his office. Before his passing, Grigol Chkhikvadze bequeathed that his expedition material, handwritten works, and other material be fully handed over to the TSC Ethnomusicology Department after his death, yet the family living in his house still has not carried out his will, and unfortunately, today it is not known whether this material is still at the location or not. It is audio expedition material recorded on cassette in various Georgian regions from the end of the 1970s to the 1990s lost in unclear circumstances.

Most of the archived audio material of the ethnomusicology department has been digitized and work is ongoing on the portion that remains in analog format, soon all the expedition material will be digitized. Many CDs of Ethnomusicology Lab Archive recordings have been released, although a large portion of this material is still unreleased, thereby hindering society at large from having access to the Conservatoire's archival material. I hope some projects will soon be implemented and access to one of the most intriguing archives in Georgia be further increased.



Ivane Javakhishvili Institute of Ethnology and History

One of the oldest academic institutions, the Institute of History and Archeology, is created in Georgia on July 1, 1917, while the country was preparing to obtain independence, with the institution undergoing name changes many times throughout history. Finally, today it is known as the Institute of Ethnology and History. The Institute's very first task was to study the languages, way of life, and antiquities of the Caucasian populace and its kindred living and extinct peoples from a linguistic and cultural perspective (Topuridze, 1988: 7). A musical folklore department is formed only dozens of years later in 1945, which was directed by Dimitri Arakishvili until he died in 1953.

Quite a solid foundation for studying Georgian musical folklore was created at the Institute by Ivane Javakhishvili, Dimitri Arakishvili, Grigol Chkhikvadze, and Shalva Aslanishvili. This path was successfully prolonged by Tamar Mamaladze, Nino Maisuradze, Manana Shilakadze, Ketevan Nakashidze, and other academic collaborators. Works focusing on Georgian musical folklore, such as *Georgian Folk Singing* by Grigol Chkhikvadze, *Work Songs in Kakheti* by Tamar Mamaladze, and others, were published at the Institute. Apart from the theoretical aspect, complex expeditions were actively carried out by the Institute, during which up to 15 specialists from various disciplines did field work and were involved in the expeditions per their area of study. Starting in the 1960s, the Institute especially focused on studying songs and instruments from a historical, ethnographic perspective, led by Nino Maisuradze, Manana Shilakadze, and others. Quite robust expedition work proceeded alongside the academic work. In fact, this continued up to 2006, when the musical folklore department ceased to function at the Institute. Right at this time, Manana Shilakadze takes several magnetic tape reels, on which hundreds of audio recordings are attested, over to the Conservatoire from Tamar Mamaladze's fund, where she digitized them and then returned the reels to the Institute's depository. It is great news that the Institute's musical fund – audio works, as well as manuscripts – will be fully digitized by the Folklore State Center by year's end.

Despite several unstable situations developing at the Institute, to this day, a large part of the material saved as the result of employees' tireless labor is kept in the Institute Archive Fund, although there is some material considered scattered and lost. The Dimitri Arakishvili, Shalva Aslanishvili, Grigol Chkhikvadze, Tamar Mamaladze, Manana Shilakadze, Niko Sulkhaniashvili, Nino Maisuradze, Irina Gegechkori, and "Miscellaneous" Funds are in the Institute Archive. Audio recordings, as well as expedition journals, scores, and handwritten works, are found in the funds. The audio material is recorded in the following formats: wax cylinders (which, as was the case for the Conservatoire and National Archives, were digitized through the Voices from the Past Project in 2006–2008), magnetic tape reels, vinyl records, gramophone records, and cassettes. Several dozen wax cylinders are kept at the Institute on which are recorded expedition recordings by Sergi Zhghenti, Shalva Aslanishvili, and Tamar Mamaladze. There is an especially large number of vinyl records (480 units), with Tamar Mamaladze's expedition recordings being discovered on many of them after digitization and the originals are on magnetic tape reels. The reasons for being copied to vinyl records and the identity of the copier are unknown, yet when the identical expedition recordings are compared to each other, that on the tape reels and that copied on the vinyl records, the audio quality of the vinyl records is much better. This will be of great help when releasing the material in the future. As noted by me when talking about the Conservatoire Archive above, part of Tamar Mamaladze's expedition material copied on vinyl records had wound up in the Conservatoire

Ethnomusicology Lab Archives, which after undergoing certain procedures, will be returned to the Institute Archives. There are many photographic negatives kept in the Archives, with their contents being unknown because the material has not been digitized to this day, although it is plausible for expeditions conducted during various periods to be shown on them.

The Tamar Mamaladze Fund must be noted separately. Unfortunately, her name still has not received any appreciation as is due, her work remains unstudied. Tamar Mamaladze has recorded around 1,000 samples, practically all over Georgia and even elsewhere. Many works not recorded by any other ethnomusicologists, recorders, or collectors are found in her expedition audio recording fund, regrettably, there are not even any monographs about it. This will certainly be rectified when the Institute's material is first digitized in collaboration with the Folklore State Center and then an exhaustive publication is dedicated to Tamar Mamaladze's work.

Even the Institute of Ethnology and History Archive has missing material. In general, there are some cases when it is not known what has been lost, which is unfortunate, but it is twice as lamentable when you know precisely which unique works have been lost, as is the case in the Institute's musical fund. When I was looking at an old inventory log, it meticulously described as to what songs were recorded, the year, the expedition, and those participating, but appearing in the titles of some collections is: "Not at the location. Kept at Tamar Mamaladze's house "Not at the location. Kept at Grigol Chkhikvadze's house". At this time, several emotions wash over you – anger, because of the inattentive handling of archive material; sorrow, because of the loss of recordings; and hope that they might be found.

Quite soon, society at large will have the means of accessing the Institute archive material in an electronic, as well as printed publication format, thanks to the previously mentioned project "The Digitization of the Institute of Ethnology and History Musical Fund".



Anzor Erkomaishvili Folklore State Centre

In 1936, the Folk Art Office was established in Tbilisi aiming to find works of folklore and study, preserve, and popularize them. From 1937 to 2005, the Folk Art Office underwent reorganization many times, with the office's name changing every time and the office being combined with other pursuits within the reorganization. Finally, beginning in 2005, it was addressed as the Folklore State Center following the reorganization conducted by Giorgi Ushikishvili. To avoid any confusion caused for the reader by mentioning the names it had at different time periods, it will be much easier if I mention the Folk Art Office as the Folklore Center.

From the day it was first founded, the Folklore Center has been focused on every area of folklore, with even theater (amateur, folk theater) falling under its jurisdiction. Since the 1940s, the Folklore Center has organized amateur art festivals (Olympiads), in which amateur ensembles from every Georgian region participated. In connection with this, albums dedicated to Olympiads held at various times are kept, to this day, in the Folklore Center Archive, where there is an assortment of photos, newspaper and journal articles, organizational documents, etc. The Archive had not been a separate entity at the Folklore Center, and accordingly, every category, whether it be folk singing, oral folklore, choreography, visual or applied art, was in charge of its own archive. This was until an archive department was established after reorganization in 2004, which to this day is managed by Mrs. Nana Kalandadze.

Due to the non-existence of an orderly structure from the very start, a lot of material did not survive to 2004, with much of it being scattered and lost, unfortunately. For example, there are in fact no surviving audio recordings in the Folklore State Center Archive despite sufficiently active expeditions having been conducted since the 1930s. There were frequent business trips, a special created commission actively went about to monitor district choirs. Joint expeditions were conducted with various other organizations.

Despite a dearth of audio recordings at the Folklore Center Archives, on the contrary, there is quite a large archive of manuscripts. First starting in the 1930s, folk songs and chants notated by Razhden Khundadze, a famous collector of Georgian chants, are kept there. The score for Razhden Khundadze's opera *Utsnauri Kortsili (The Strange Wedding)* was stored in the archive, which was taken away by his own son based on a letter from the Ministry of Culture. After this, any traces of the manuscript are lost, although some fragments of this opera have survived to this day at the Folklore Center Archive. Otar Chijavadze's works, *An Abridged Encyclopedic Dictionary of Georgian Musical Folklore* and *Work Songs in Western Georgia*, are kept in the archive, which was published by the Folklore Center in 2009 and 2019. The largest number of notated manuscripts come from the Georgian composer Grigol Kokeladze, who directed the Folklore Center for 15 years from 1937 to 1952. He had notated folk songs from various Georgian regions. Chants performed by the Karbelashvili Brothers and transcribed into notation by Grigol Chkhikvadze, Zakaria Paliashvili's manuscript discovered in Ia Kargareli's archive, Shalva Mshvelidze's Pshavian expedition material, Akvsenti Megrelidze's notated manuscripts, etc., are especially worthy of note among the manuscript works in the Folklore Center Archive. Folk songs performed by choirs associated with various factories or institutions and recorded on vinyl records at various times during the Soviet era are also kept in the archive.

The Folklore Center has the fastest-growing archive of folk singing (and not only that) in Georgia. Beginning in 2004, many expeditions have been conducted under the leadership of Natalia Zumbadze,

Nana Valishvili, Otar Kapanadze, Teona Rukhadze, and Sandro Natadze. Some magnetic tape reels found in Guria were digitized during several of my day trips from the Folklore Center, on which some unknown and unique recordings were discovered. For example, I will mention the reels kept in Domenti Karchava's family, a well-known Gurian singer, on which some melodies performed by him on Chonguri and some Gurian songs performed by Domenti Karchava, Ilarion Sikharulidze, and Shermadin Chkuase-li – a famous Gurian trio – were recorded. One more exceptionally valuable tape reel was given to Maia Gelashvili, an employee of the Folklore Center from Ozurgeti, and I by the children of Otar Berdzenishvili, a well-known Gurian singer. Some Gurian songs recorded in two voices by Otar Berdzenishvili and his father, the remarkable improviser Vladimer Berdzenishvili, were recorded on this reel. Interested individuals can access these recordings at the Folklore Center Archive. Personal archives from famous public figures such as the well-known singing Kavsadze family, Varlam Simonishvili, Ia Kargareti, Elene Virsaladze, Otar Berdzenishvili, Temur Kevkhishvili, and others, are entrusted to the Archive by their families. Material kept by the Folklore State Center in its archive is periodically published online and in printed format, thereby increasing the availability of this material to a wider audience.

Epilogue

When writing this article, I found myself faced with a complex task to somehow manage to speak about these four large archives and convey their past and present, the unique history of each one – the history of saving archive material and selfless labor. I attempted to trace an outline of each archive, deepen the reader's interest – now it's your turn. Voices here and there are saying that everything in Georgia's archives has been seen, everything is known, everybody knows everything, which could not be further from the truth. I hope this short article is clear proof of this, beyond which we possess an immense body of material in Georgia – in the archives of museums, institutes, or various other organizations. Therefore, don't give up the fight, he who searches for it finds it!

I will make it even easier for those who are interested through the project mentioned several times in the article "The Cataloguing of Archival Folklore Material", through which a work group travels all over Georgia and conducts a census of all the institutions where folklore material is kept. This project's electronic catalog will be published on a specially created site, thereby making it even simpler to find the material you need.

In the foreword, I mentioned that working in an archive is quite an adventurous endeavor, an adventure full of surprises, although disappointment is also encountered on a rare basis. You might possibly come across a chest full of "gold" in a place you were not anticipating and be left disappointed in a place where you had high hopes.

At the end of the article, I want to thank Mrs. Ninuli Nakashidze, an employee at the Tbilisi State Conservatoire Ethnomusicology Lab, and Mrs. Nana Kalandadze, director of the Folklore State Center Archive and Library, for their assistance.

Thanks also goes to all those individuals, the boundless love and selfless labor of whom the treasure called folk singing has been preserved to this day.

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GEORGIAN FOLK SONGS IN FOREIGN ARCHIVES

In 1877, the American inventor Thomas Edison patented and one year later, presented society with a new invention – the phonograph – through which it became possible to record any sound, whether this be the sounds of nature or a person talking. The invention of the phonograph elicited great astonishment. When talking about ways a phonograph could be used, the inventor himself, of course, mentioned recording music.

However, the equipment caused some people to become aggressive and protest in some countries. “Hearing a person’s voice from some box” for a certain, quite educated portion of society was unimaginable and even unacceptable. For example, after a public demonstration of the phonograph in Russia, those presenting “the talking mechanical trickster” were arrested, given a great monetary fine for “fraud” and even sentenced to prison.

But the phonograph quite soon occupied a very important place in a human’s life. In the beginning (although the inventor worked periodically to perfect it), it was possible to record a few minutes of audio and play it back on Edison’s phonograph. Other people began thinking to improve the device. In 1886, Alexander Bell, his cousin Chichester Bell, and Charles Tainter invented and patented some new equipment – the graphophone – representing an improved variant of the phonograph. Recording on wax cylinders began.

Some companies interested in this equipment also appeared: The Volta Graphophone Company and American Graphophone Company were created in America, and later on in Great Britain in the 1920s – Columbia Graphophone Company.

At the end of the 19th century, the graphophone was further improved by the inventor Emile Berliner who created the gramophone. Wax cylinders were replaced by flat discs – gramophone records. He also founded a new company Berliner Gramophone, two years later in Great Britain – the Gramophone Company (which is called EMI today and is one of the largest recording companies in the world), and then in Germany – Deutsche Grammophon.

At the beginning of the 20th century, however, the pathophone appeared, produced by the French company Pathé. The pathophone, in fact, represented a portable version/variant of the gramophone.

During that time, it was probably difficult to imagine that in just a little while the recording industry would become one of the most popular and profitable businesses in the world.

It is these inventors and companies that we must thank, in that today we can listen to extraordinary masters of folk singing from the beginning of the 20th century: folk songs performed by Dedas Levana, Levan Mughalashvili, Noko Khurtsia, the Chavleishvili, Erkomaishvili, and Khukhunaishvili families, and others; as well as the voices of Vano Sarajishvili, Akaki Tsereteli, Vaso Abashidze, Nato Gabunia, Philimon Koridze, and others.

Here is what Zakaria Paliashvili wrote in the introduction to his score collection: Frequently while transcribing folk songs into notation, “people unwholly suited to this task...do not pay attention to recording the folk melodies free of mistakes, cleanly...our Georgian folk songs have suffered this fate to this day and this undesirable phenomenon wouldn’t have ended had science not invented the remarkable machine called the ‘phonograph’, through which all of Europe is collecting folk songs today...” (Paliashvili, 1910).

The first recordings of Georgian folk songs belong to the beginning of the 20th century.

In 1901, Zakaria Paliashvili (Kartl-Kakheti, Imereti, Guria, Racha) and Dimitri Arakishvili (Kartl-Kakheti) traveled independently from each other to record Georgian folk songs with phonographs. In this case, I want to focus on the expeditions conducted by Dimitri Arakishvili, because we are interested in recordings of Georgian folk songs that have taken up residence in the archives of other countries.

Dimitri Arakishvili (1873–1953) was born in Vladikavkaz. He demonstrated a love of music early on by singing in the Vladikavkaz Choir at age 10. Hearing Aghniashvili’s choir made a great impression upon the 13 year old Arakishvili, by whom national sentiments were awoken within him through the performed Georgian folk songs and the desire to finally get a musical education was cemented.

In the years 1894–1901, Dimitri Arakishvili studied for a degree in music theory and composition at the Moscow Philharmonic Musical Drama Institute.

It was during this period, the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, that interest in folk songs increased in Russia. Musicians, the goal of whom was to save folk singing, flocked around Moscow University’s Ethnographic Department of the Imperial Society of Natural Science, Anthropology, and Ethnography Amateurs. Such people were: Yevgeniya Linyova, Aleksandr Listopadov, Aleksandr Maslov, Nikolay Yanchuk, and others. The idea of creating a musical ethnographic commission came to fruition at ethnographic department meetings.

Dimitri Arakishvili was also among these musicians, who imparted tremendous importance on the task of saving the folk treasury, and folk singing. Despite living in Russia, Arakishvili was well informed of the processes taking place in the homeland, frequently published letters in the *Iveria* newspaper, and gave beneficial advice to folk song collectors.

In 1897, the folklore scholar Yevgeniya Linyova was the first to record folk works with the phonograph, which she called a “pocketbook”. In September of the same year, she gave a presentation with these recordings and a paper at the Society’s ethnographic department meeting, which was also attended by distinguished professors from Moscow Conservatoire and especially guests from the Russian music world.

This event was followed by great discussions and seething passions, resulting in the ethnographic department finally deciding the necessity of creating a special musical ethnographic commission.

The first meeting of the Musical Ethnographic Commission (MEC) was held in 1901.

Dimitri Arakishvili got so actively involved in this movement that he was even named a commission member. Within the same year, Arakshvili received his first task from the commission – he had to record examples of Georgian folklore in various Georgian regions using a phonograph.

Davit Sarajishvili, the well-known Georgian industrialist, art patron, and public figure provided the

necessary funds for the expedition and also helped the scholar many times later in implementing his various ideas. In the summer of 1901, Arakishvili traveled to Kartli and Kakheti and recorded around 60 samples. He presented a paper before the commission titled *Georgian – Kartl-Kakhetian Songs*.

Then in the years 1902–1908, several more expeditions to various Georgian regions were set up by Dimitri Arakishvili, and over 500 samples (second variant – around 600) were recorded on phonograph wax cylinders. All expedition findings were published in a collection of works by the MEC.

It must be said that the papers published by Arakishvili in these collections were not just accounts. These were studies about the history, ethnography, customs, and musical peculiarities of the Georgian regions followed by song texts in Georgian and Russian and notated material. During these years, Kartl-Kakhetian, Pshavian, Khevsurian, Mtiuletian, Mokhevurian, Tushian, Imeretian, Megrelian, Gurian, Rachaian and Svan songs were printed in volumes 1, 2, and 5, as well as some letters about Georgian folk instruments and Georgian chant. Arakishvili published his studies in the form of excerpts from the commission's works.

As for the audio recordings themselves, or the wax cylinders; after works were transcribed into notation, they were returned to the commission by expedition leaders, with the commission having decided to create a “Phonograph Museum”. For this, the collection of the musical recordings (wax cylinders) of all peoples a part of Russia (and not only) was begun, and it was announced that anyone who had recordings of folk songs could bring and entrust them to the commission. This, of course, first affected the leaders of expeditions entrusted by the commission – all the wax cylinders representing commission property and possessed by members had to be collected and handed over to the librarian tasked with describing them.¹

The idea of creating the Phonograph Museum was not fated to be implemented – it was thrown into disarray by WWI. In the years of the revolution and after it, quite a lot of wax cylinders were forever destroyed.

To this day, it has remained undetermined what happened to the wax cylinders on which Arakishvili recorded the samples of Georgian folk music. From special literature it is understood that the wax cylinders belonging to MEC changed locations several times, the present location of some are known, but no information concerning Arakishvili's wax cylinders has yet been established. It is unfortunate because this would be the oldest (earliest) and largest archive (around 600 examples!) by volume of tremendous benefit to scholars and performers of Georgian folk music.

When we speak of Georgian folk songs kept in Russian archives, first St. Petersburg's phonograph archive must be mentioned – the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Russian Literature, which was called the Pushkin House.

Collections belonging to Nikolay Derzhavin, Joseph Shillinger, and Eugene Gippius, as well as to Georgian music recorders Shalva Aslanishvili, Grigol Chkhikvadze, and Ioseb Megreliдзе are kept here. Let's follow them in order.

Nikolay Derzhavin (1877–1953) was a philologist (Slavic language expert) and historian. In 1900, after graduating from the institute in Russia, he was sent to teach the Russian language at the Batumi Grammar School. Derzhavin lived and worked in Tbilisi during the years 1904–1907, teaching the Rus-

¹ I greatly thank Sandro Natadze for supplying information and academic literature related to this topic.

sian language at Tbilisi's first grammar school and chairing the Tbilisi Society of Folk Universities; 12 education schools were founded by him for the local populace. During these years he actively studied the ethnography of Caucasian peoples, in parallel with this he was busy with academic work, published literary, historical, and ethnographical articles. The first expedition to Turkey and Bulgaria was conducted by Nikolay Derzhavin in 1903 at the behest of the Russian Academy of Sciences, while he was living in Georgia. The second one however was in Bulgaria and the Bessarabia province in the years 1909–1910, when he was a post-graduate student at St. Petersburg University. He recorded folklore works on phonograph wax cylinders during these trips.

It seems Derzhavin had also visited Guria during this expedition, because around 15 Gurian songs recorded by him on wax cylinders are dated 1910, which are kept at the Pushkin House. Unfortunately, there is still no information to be found regarding where and from whom these songs were recorded. It is possible that this information might have been indicated in data about the Caucasus and Georgia in Derzhavin's works kept at the Pushkin House.

In Joseph Shillinger's (1895–1943) biography, it is read: Soviet and American composer, pedagogue, and musicologist, because he lived in the Soviet Union until 1929 and the last 14 years were spent in the United States. During the first period, he was active as a pedagogue, choir director, and composer. In America, however, he focused more on pedagogical work. His students were George Gershwin, Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, and other famous musicians. Another realm of his work was represented by film music and music for Disney animated movies. At the same time, he was known as a poet, artist, sculptor, photographer, and mathematician. As a composer, he was enthralled by modern music and came up with his own "Shillinger Theory", which became quite popular, and following the musician's death, was published in two enormous volumes: *The Shillinger System of Musical Composition* and *The Mathematical Basis of the Arts*.

When Joseph Shillinger was active as a composer while living in Russia after the Revolution, he frequently recorded his own ideas "about the creation of a new folk music expressing the spirit of the people". The composer's fantasy was possibly given an enormous stimulus by present-day life, for example, while working, doing agricultural work – Shillinger wrote with his own musical accompaniment. (Bretanitskaia, 2015:138-139).

The date of Shillinger's trip to Georgia is indicated as July 1927. Khevsuretian songs were recorded by the musician in Juta Village, Dusheti; Mokhevirian – in Gergeti and Kazbegi; Gurian songs, however, were recorded in Batumi (18 wax cylinders in all). Unfortunately, other details, such as the identities of performers, are unknown.

Shalva Aslanishvili (1896–1981) graduated from Tbilisi Conservatoire in 1927 with a degree in music theory and composition and continued his studies in Russia – he was a student at Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) Conservatoire in 1927–1930. At this time, Aslanishvili already had a little bit of experience working on an expedition. In 1927, he participated, together with Shalva Mshvelidze, in an expedition conducted in Svaneti by Larisa Kutateladze, the prorector of Tbilisi Conservatoire. With this experience, Shalva Aslanishvili was sent off to record folk songs in Racha in September 1928. He went around to villages in the Oni district: Glola, Onchevi, Seva, Parakheti, Sheubani, and two villages in the Ambrolauri

district – Kvatskhuti and Tsesi, where up to 80 samples were recorded. The instrumental tunes recorded by Zakaria Eradze, a famous bagpipe player in Parakheti Village, Georgia must be emphatically noted, as well as around 20 (more than 20) ecclesiastical chants recorded in Kvatskhuti, which were a rarity at that time. 38 wax cylinders with Racha expedition recordings are kept at the Pushkin House Archives.

Eugene Gippius (1903–1985) was an ethnomusicologist, folklore scholar, and pedagogue. He had graduated from Petrograd Conservatoire with a degree in composition and conducting; from the Art Institute with a specialty in music history, and was a post-graduate advised by Boris Asafiev. In parallel, he also studied at the university's ethno-linguistics department. Gippius had mastery of several European languages and unique musical hearing; at the same time, he was a remarkable pianist, composer, and conductor.

From 1926, Eugene Gippius got fascinated by Russian folk music and after that, his entire life was associated with folklore. A phonograph archive of folk music recordings was founded through his initiative at the end of the 1920s at the Art History Institute, which he himself headed and directed until 1943. Gippius traveled for decades and apart from Russian music, recorded and studied the music of other peoples – German, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Arabic, Hindi, Indonesian, Mongolian, Chinese, Japanese, Uzbek, Armenian, Ossetian folk music. He also traveled to Georgia in 1927 along with his spouse Zinaida Evald and the well-known musicologist Kristofor Kushnaryov.

In 1930, in Leningrad, Anzor Erkomaishvili first heard the story of recording Gurian songs from Artem Erkomaishvili's choir using a phonograph through his grandfather, and then from Shalva Aslanishvili, who was his pedagogue at the conservatoire, and at the same time, was studying in Leningrad (Erkomaishvili, 2015:64-66).

In 1929, three collectives who had won at Georgia's Choral Arts Festival: Artem Erkomaishvili's choir from Batumi, Mikha Jighauri's Kartl-Kakhetian choir, and the Dzuku Lolua West Georgian Choir under the direction of Kirile Pachkoria – were invited to go on tour in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kharkov.

Over the course of 15 days, they held concerts at several institutions in Leningrad in February 1930, including at the conservatoire, where the entire Russian musical society was astonished. Enchanted by Georgian folk songs, Eugene Gippius decided to record their songs with a phonograph.

Due to the complexity of Gurian songs, the songs were recorded using 4 phonographs to make it easier when transcribing them into notation: each voice was recorded separately on three of them and all voices together on the remaining one. Eugene Gippius himself was quite proud of these recordings. In a conversation with Anzor Erkomaishvili at the beginning of the 1980s, he pointed out that he was especially awestruck by the personalities and performances of two men older than 90 – Gigo Erkomaishvili and Giorgi Babilodze, he was amazed by the tone quality of their voices. He declared that Gurian songs “represent a unique world phenomenon” and that these phonograph recordings have immense significance since they had “opened the eyes” of musicians from different countries to folklore. Gippius, first might have been implying the Swedish musicologist and ethnologist Ernst Emsheimer, who had truly been greatly impressed by Georgian singing. The scholar became quite fascinated by Gurian songs and began to decipher them. In later years, Emsheimer devoted many articles and studies to Gurian singing. In 1936, he traveled together with his spouse to the Caucasus, where they recorded Georgian and Ossetian songs.

7–8 songs were recorded by Gurian singers by Gippius. Songs performed by Mikha Jighauri's Kartl-Kakhetian Choir and Kirile Pachkoria's choir are recorded on several wax cylinders.

In 1935, more than 20 Gurian songs were recorded by members of Kirile Pachkoria's choir on tour in Leningrad using Eugene Gippius' same method. The ensemble represented the Gurian wing of the choir, so to say. Its members were Vladimer Berdzenishvili (director, bass), Ermalo Sikhharulidze (first voice), Teophile Lomtadidze (krimanchuli), Mikheil Koroshinadze, and Ushangi Shevardnadze.

Some folklore scholars, Ketevan Baishvili and Natalia Zumbadze, were sent to Leningrad from Tbilisi Conservatoire's folklore department in 1983. They got to know the extant documentation connected to these recordings at the Pushkin House. Per this information, an unpublished work titled *Gurian Songs* dated 1937 by Ioseb Megrelidze is kept at the archive. In the work, the author talks about Guria and the Gurians, their songs, texts (with a Russian translation), refrains, song performers, and recording history. The informative section is followed by 20 Gurian songs transcribed into notation deciphered by Ernst Emsheimer through Megrelidze's help. This is followed by a song list. These are the songs recorded in 1935 by Berdzenishvili's ensemble.

In the catalog *Georgia Phonograph Recordings Abroad*, Anzor Erkomaishvili writes: "I was informed by Korguzalov (speaking about Vladislav Korguzalov, the director of the phonograph department at the Pushkin House), that these songs had been transcribed in their own time by the well-known choirmaster Vladimer Babilua and are currently kept at Tbilisi's Central Archive of Audio-Visual and Film Documents" (Erkomaishvili, 2007:22).

It is not indicated by the author as to specifically which recordings are being spoken of. Still, in 2005–2006, 10 wax cylinders on which Gurian songs performed by Vladimer Berdzenishvili's choir and recorded in Leningrad in 1935 were heard were actually discovered in the Central Archive of Audio-Visual and Film Documents while working on *the Catalog of Wax Cylinder Phonographs Kept in Georgia* and on some recordings.

The Gurian songs recorded by Eugene Gippius represent an invaluable treasury for us today.

Let's take a look at Grigol Chkhikvadze's collection.

Grigol Chkhikvadze (1900–1986) was the son of Zakaria Chkhikvadze, a well-known Georgian pedagogue and public figure who had been familiar with traditional Georgian music since his childhood. In 1927 he graduated from Tbilisi Conservatoire with a degree in theory and composition and continued his studies in Leningrad. In 1932, he graduated from Leningrad Conservatoire with the same focus, in 1935 however as a post-graduate student in folklore from the Soviet Union Academy of Sciences Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography in Leningrad. He first began recording songs at the end of the 1910s. While in Leningrad, Chkhikvadze conducted two expeditions during the years 1933–1934.

In 1933, he was sent to the Ozurgeti district and Batumi to record some Georgian folk songs on wax phonograph cylinders. Chkhikvadze went to the villages of Tkhinvali, Askana, Pampaleti, Zvani, and Mtispiri in Ozurgeti. Notably, he recorded several songs in Ozurgeti from the Ozurgeti Trade Union Council Gurian Choir directed by Varlam Simonishvili; from the Village Trade Union Council Gurian Choir directed by Nikiphore Chavleishvili in Askana; from the Salukvadze brothers in Pampaleti; and from Dimitri Patarava's family in Zvani (according to other info – in the Kobuleti district). He recorded

up to 10 songs in Batumi during the same expedition, out of which several were performed by the Batumi City Council Choir directed by Artem Erkomaishvili.

Spearheaded by some Georgian post-graduate students living in Leningrad: Folklore scholar and musicologist Grigol Chkhikvadze (USSR Academy of Sciences Oriental Studies Institute), folklorist Elene Virsaladze (Leningrad Institute of History, Philosophy, and Linguistics), and linguist Shota Dzidziguri (Institute of Language and Thought) – a complex expedition was arranged in Pasanauri in August-September 1934. The expedition went to Pasanauri and the surrounding villages of the Dusheti district: Dumatskho (Gudamakari Valley), Mughuro (Khada Valley), Kimbariani (Mleta Village Council), and recorded more than 40 folk songs or instrumental tunes.

Grigol Chkhivadze conducted expeditions until old age, went all around Georgia, and left invaluable recordings for future generations.

Ioseb Megrelidze (1909–1996) was a philologist and literary studies specialist. While yet a student, he began collecting linguistic, folklore, and ethnographic material in various Georgian regions. After graduating from Tbilisi University, beginning in 1931, he first studied as a post-graduate, then worked at the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of Language and Thought in Leningrad. In 1932, he was tasked by the academy to go on an expedition to Guria, to some villages in the Chokhatauri district – Khidistavi and Chachieti – and recorded more than 30 examples on wax phonograph cylinders. Some of these included Gurian folk songs, instrumental melodies, and urban songs.

Ioseb Megrelidze's name is associated with yet another collection at the Pushkin House. After debuting at the Georgian Arts Festival in Moscow in 1937, some members of Kirile Pachkoria's choir were invited to Leningrad to record some folk songs. According to documentation kept at Tbilisi Conservatoire's Ethnomusicology Lab Archive, they were an ensemble consisting of 8 singers directed by Vladimer Berdzenishvili and a women's chonguri ensemble under the direction of Avksenti Megrelidze. The recording session was conducted by Ioseb Megrelidze and Sofia Magid.

Sofia Magid (1892–1954) was a musicologist and folklorist who worked at the Institute of Russian Literature and Art and recorded folk music works from Jews living in the Soviet Union. She was a scholar and employee at the phonograph archive during these years.

It is interesting that apart from the Gurian folk songs performed by Vladimer Berdzenishvili's choir, two chants were also recorded: "Dghes saghmrtoman madlman" (Today the Divine Grace) and "Movedit da vsvat" (Come, Let's Drink). From the chonguri ensemble however, there were modern Soviet folk songs and the popular urban song "Suliko" by Varinka Tsereteli, which had been specially arranged for Avksenti Megrelidze's chonguri ensemble.

In 1936, they also recorded 8 Laz examples. The only thing noted in the phonograph archive's inventory book is that Sofia Magid had recorded some songs from the Laz in 1936. Still, Ioseb Megrelidze published an article in the journal *Soviet Art* in 1978, from which we find out that the songs had been recorded by some Laz students under the direction of Hasan Helimishi (Megrelidze, 1978:78-79).

Gramophone records made at various times are also kept at the Pushkin House, on which the choirs of Kirile Pachkoria, Mikheil Kavsadze, and Gigo Erkomaishvili, some urban instrumental tunes, etc., are recorded.

When we speak about wax cylinders kept in European countries, on which works of Georgian folk music are recorded, the earliest material recorded by Adolph Durr must be mentioned, which is kept at phonograph archives in Berlin and Vienna.

Adolph Durr (1867–1930) was a German linguist and ethnographer. He was interested in the languages and cultures of foreign countries and traveled to countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa. In the years 1902–1913, Durr lived and worked in Georgia and Azerbaijan. During this period, he studied the languages of Caucasian people, collected ethnographic material and domestic items, did literary illustrations, took photos, and recorded textual material and music via phonograph. He called his own studies “academic surveys”. Throughout this time, Durr traveled to Tusheti, Kakheti, Kartli, Imereti, Svaneti, Abkhazia, Ossetia, and other regions in the Caucasus. 38 wax cylinders on which examples of Laz, Megrelian, Svan, Abkhazian, and Ossetian folk music are recorded, are kept at the Berliner Phonogrammarchiv.

Audio material recorded by Durr in Tbilisi, in 1909, is also kept at the Vienna Phonogrammarchiv. Speech examples are primarily recorded on these cylinders, although there are some recordings of songs. Adolph Durr was not a musician. He did not pay attention to fully recording songs, especially polyphonic ones. Even more that recording several voices at the same time via phonograph was quite difficult. In all, these recordings represented a single link of the ethnographic material found. Still, from a historical perspective, these recordings are quite valuable.

Recordings made by the Royal Phonographic Commission of Prussia in 1915–1918 – kept in Germany at the Berlin Ethnologic Museum Phonogram Archive and Humboldt University Audio Archive, and in Austria at the Vienna Phonogrammarchiv – deserve to be specially noted.

During WWI, audio material from prisoners, including Georgians, held in Prussian military camps, was recorded by the Royal Phonographic Commission on wax cylinders (linguistic material, stories, proverbs, prayers, songs, texts, etc.). The recordings were conducted by Robert Lach on Austrian territory, and by Georg Schünemann in Germany. It seems in both cases Adolph Durr, who understood Georgian, was tasked with resolving problems related to the texts (recording in Georgian, German transcription, and translation).

Recordings done in 1915 in Theresienstadt, and in 1916 in Eger are kept at the Vienna archive. There are Kartl-Kakhetian, Gurian, Megrelian, and Svan poems, stories, and songs; 24 works in all.

There is more material kept at the German archive: songs recorded in Mannheim, Ohrdruf, Münster, Puchheim, and Žagaň, 90 works in all. The songs are recorded on wax cylinders. Still, after recording the works, Georg Schünemann selected the best ones, and they were recorded on records. These recordings are of noticeably better quality, only there are not as many. All 15 of the works recorded in Žagaň were recorded a second time on records. 10 singers participated in recording the songs in Žagaň.

Polyphonic Georgian songs performed by a trio from a camp in Forchheim and by 10 singers in Žagaň turned out to be the most interesting for the commission, with all of them being re-recorded on records.

Usually, a recorder tries to record a good musical example with the best performance on the device (although for academic study any song and singer are of interest). Something special took place when recording the folk songs from the Georgian prisoners – the works were recorded by people who had met

each other completely by chance, in captivity, no less. It is amazing how non-professional singers living in different Georgian regions were able to sing together in a short time and perform polyphonic Kartl-Kakhetian, Megrelian, Acharan, and Gurian songs with such skill.

Even more important is the fact that Georgian folklore works were heard for the first time in Europe thanks to these recordings. Not only did Robert Lach and Georg Schünemann develop an interest in Georgian polyphony, having participated directly in the recording process, other well-known scholars did as well: Sigfried Nadel from Austria, and the Germans Marius Schneider and Erich Stockmann. In partnership with Tbilisi State Conservatoire International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony, the Berliner Phonogrammarchiv published a book in 2014 *Echoes from the Past: Georgian Prisoner Songs Recorded on Wax Cylinders in Germany 1916–1918* (Tsurtsunia & Ziegler, 2014).

Echoes from the past: these recordings. The release includes 2 CDs accompanied by all kinds of information about the song texts, performers, recording location, recorders, and other details that existed at the Berlin Archive and Humboldt University.

As noted previously, some companies appeared in the world at the beginning of the 20th century which recorded music on gramophone records instead of wax cylinders, they reproduced and distributed them – often paired with gramophones.

One of them, the Gramophone Company, chose Georgia as a production center for this business in the Caucasus region. In 1901 in Tbilisi, the company opened its own headquarters within the Orient Hotel building (facing the military cathedral) at 9 Golovin (Rustaveli) Avenue, which was also used as a recording studio and serviced all of Transcaucasia. Some audio recording engineers came to Tbilisi during the years 1901–1914 to record some songs: the brothers William and Frederick Gaisberg, Edmund Pearce, as well as the brothers Franz and Max Hampe (Fred Tyler was the manager of the Tbilisi branch). They brought singers from various Georgian towns or villages to Tbilisi. From Tbilisi, the audio engineers went around recording in the North Caucasus, Asia Minor, and Baku. Catalogs were printed. We are provided with some information by Anzor Erkomaishvili (which he had read in some material from the St. Petersburg Saltykov-Shchedrin Library) regarding which an audio recording studio branch had been opened in Kutaisi in 1908 (Erkomaishvili, 2007;16). Yet, after the start of WWI, the situation gradually fell into disarray and the company left Tbilisi in 1915.

Beginning in 1906, yet another French company Pathé produced recordings in Tbilisi, the shop of which was also located on Golovin Avenue at #10.

The largest contribution to finding gramophone records of Georgian folk music was made by Anzor Erkomaishvili. While traveling with the Rustavi Ensemble throughout the world over the years, he would search for Georgian recordings in all countries or cities. It was comparatively easier to go to a location and find some information within the conditions of the Soviet Union. The same cannot be said of countries abroad. Through the help of his connections, he was able to find some Georgian recordings in several European cities.

For 35 years, Anzor Erkomaishvili searched out Georgian recordings in Moscow, Leningrad, Riga, London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna.

In 2006 and 2007, two catalogs were published by him: *Georgian Folk Singing. The First Phono-*

graph Recordings. 1901–1914 and *Georgian Phonograph Recordings Abroad*, in which he tells in detail the stories of finding these recordings and informs us of catalogs published in various countries throughout the years. These catalogs were of tremendous help to him in finding Georgian material in archives.

It is gleaned from the catalogs that Caucasian gramophone records were made in Hanover, Germany until 1903 (Erkomaishvili & Rodonaia, 2006:54-56). After gramophone factories were constructed in Riga (1901–1902) and Moscow (1910), the production of Caucasian records was transferred over to these cities. There were some instances when metal matrices were kept in one city, with the records being printed in another. The situation was further messed up after the start of WWI (1914). Material prepared for printing was sometimes sent to another city, or generally lost. Moreover, it also happened that a catalog had been printed but the recordings were lost. On the contrary, records were printed, yet there was no longer any time to publish the catalogs. No more catalogs were printed after 1915.

Unfortunately, we were not given the means of seeing the archives ourselves and clarifying some issues of interest to us. Therefore, we will rely on Mr. Anzor Erkomaishvili's information and present some of it in brief.

Out of the Georgian recordings of the Riga archive's second catalog (dated to 1914), the following must be especially noted: the Tbilisi Comrade Choral Choir under the direction of Mikheil Kavsadze; a chanters' choir directed by Sandro Kavsadze; a choir directed by Tsamtsiev (Apolon Dzamsashvili-Tsamtsishvili); a Kutaisi choir under the baton of N. Kiparenko; a Gurian choir (G. and A. Erkomaishvili, Chavleishvili, Makharadze, Lomidze, Iobishvili, Kechakmadze, Molarishvili, Simonishvili, Babilodze); a choir (the Khukhunaishvili family, Kukulava, Pipaishvili); a Kakhetian choir (Dedas Levana, Bato Rostomashvili, Aleksii Elovshvili, Solomon Kurtsikidze, Kniazashvili); songs and art romances performed by Ia Kargareli and Davit Paghava, etc.

According to Anzor Erkomaishvili, the card index of the Russian State Archive of Audio-Visual Documents contains some Georgian recordings included in a record collection released at the Tbilisi branch of the Melodiya Company in 1987: *The First Gramophone Records in Georgia. 1907–1914*, with recordings performed until 1915. There are also some "unique recordings" in a record series compiled in the 1930s. Choirs and ensembles under the direction of Apolon Tsamtsiev, Gigo Erkomaishvili (the 1907 recordings), Sandro Kavsadze, Samuel Chavleishvili, Levan Asabashvili (Dedas Levana), Kotsia Khukhunaishvili, Ivane Margiani, Platon Pantsulaia, Mikho Jighauri, Galaktion Chelidze, Beglar Akobia, Maro Tarkhishvili, Avksenti Megrelidze, Rema Shelegia, Kirile Pachkoria, Kitsi Gegechkori, Varlam Simonishvili, Vaso Kobakhidze, Artem Erkomaishvili, Astamur Marghania, and Lado Kavsadze were recorded.

Mr. Anzor Erkomaishvili ended up at the London Archive through the help of distinguished American ethnomusicologists Alan Lomax and Theodore Levin, whom he had met on a Rustavi Ensemble tour in the US in 1990. Ted Levin went specially to London, went around with Anzor to the archives in search of Georgian records, and in the end when a certain fee had to be paid in order to copy some works found at the British National Sound Archive, he also provided some financial assistance.

Songs and urban instrumental tunes recorded in Tbilisi and Kutaisi during the years 1902–1914 turned up in the London archives. The songs are performed by ensembles and choirs under the direction

of Ia Kargareteli, Apolon Tsamtsishvili, Sandro Kavsadze, Mikheil Kavsadze, Levan Asabashvili, Samuel Chavleishvili, Kotsia Khukhunaishvili, and Gigo Erkomaishvili; there are also some solo songs, as well as urban songs and duduk tunes.

Not much information is found concerning repositories and archives in France. According to the previously mentioned catalog, up to 30 works recorded by the Pathé Company in Tbilisi are kept at the National Library of France Archive in Paris. There are several folk songs among them where the performers' identities are unknown.

It is frequently pointed out by Anzor Erkomaishvili in the catalogs that many interesting materials will gradually surface. Still, just in London, he found only 105 Georgian records out of the more than 170 released in the years 1901–1914.

Of course, the process has not been concluded. The search must go on!

I concur with this idea and am certain the younger generation will continue to find Georgian recordings in Georgia and abroad. Especially since in an epoch of modern technology, this process has been made much easier.

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CHAPTER 3

THE PROCESS OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF GEORGIAN POLYPHONY IN RESEARCH AND PERFORMANCE

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Introduction

First, it is necessary to try and make good sense of what it means to work on Georgian folk music and who can make some contributions from this standpoint.

If this topic is examined from a wide point of view, all foreign authors who have provided some important information in association with any issue involving Georgian music, and accordingly, have enriched our knowledge concerning Georgian music must be cited here. Therefore, I deem it crucial to turn our attention to all the authors, travelers, or scholars, the writings of from whom we glean precious information for the history of Georgian music unknown elsewhere.

Of course, we also must remember that an author providing any valuable information might not have “worked” on Georgian music at all, and generally was not a scholar. Even more, it might still be contentious to this day as to how much is said in certain sources directly concerning Georgian folk music (or the music of Kartvelian tribes). This especially affects ancient facts about the music of Kartvelian tribes, which due to some understandable reasons, is quite sparse and valuable to us.

I will examine in as much detail as possible the sources where any valuable facts regarding Georgian music are provided from ancient times to the present. There will first be a discussion of accounts from historiographers and travelers, and then of academic works. I will attempt to have all this not just be something descriptive and for the findings to conform to the modern level of ethnomusicological development. So, let’s start with the very first facts our musical historiography possesses concerning the music of Kartvelian tribes.

Ancient Facts About Georgian Singing (Sargon II, Xenophon)

The earliest information about the music of (supposedly) Kartvelian tribes, naturally comes from foreigners. Specifically, the earliest info known so far to me belongs to King Sargon II of Assyria (714 BC) and the Greek military leader and historian Xenophon (401 BC). There are more than 300 years between these sources, and they have quite different contents and fates.

Sargon II

According to Sargon II’s information, when he captured the province of Mannaea located southeast of Lake Urmia (focus on Mannaea being in the modern-day territory of Iran), the local tribes had well developed agriculture, and what is especially of interest to us, they sang while working, or to use Sargon’s words “they were spurred on by joyful songs” (Chkhikvadze, Donadze and Chijavadze, 1990: 8). Giorgi Melikishvili’s well-known historical studies are behind this information. For example, see Giorgi Melikishvili’s Russian-language publication on the Mannaeans published in 1949 (Меликишвили, 1949).

There is one significant problem here. The issue of the Mannaeans' ethnic affiliation is unclear to this day. It is only known that their language neither belonged to the Semitic, nor Indo-European language families and it revealed some Hurrian elements (Меликишвили, 1949). This indicates that they must have had some ethnic and cultural proximity to the ancient Kartvelian tribes, it seems, who were far more widely spread before the appearance of people speaking in Indo-European languages. In any case, Giorgi Melikishvili declared them to be a people speaking languages preceding the Indo-European ones. Today, the province of Mannaea is quite removed from the Kartvelian tribes and is located on the modern-day territory of Iran. Still, at the same time, if we consider that the ancient population of Europe that resided here before the appearance of Indo-European speaking tribes was distinguished by a similar shared culture, then the Mannaeans' cultural and ethnic proximity to the ancient Kartvelian tribes must not surprise us.

Therefore, we can only speak about the relations of the Kartvelian tribes and the Mannaeans in general terms, since the Mannaeans, as well as the Kartvelian tribes, it seems, belonged to autochthonic, non-Indo-European, and non-Semitic tribes of this region. Accordingly, this factor must not be disregarded when speaking about the Mannaeans' musical traditions.

Now let's try to briefly analyze what this valuable, although meager information provided by Sargon might mean for the music history of possible Kartvelian tribes.

Of course, it must be strictly stated that we have no concept about what sort of songs are being spoken of here and can only express some suppositions. It is my firm belief that today there is no longer any need to argue that this would have been polyphonic singing, not because I consider this impossible, but instead because all throughout my academic career I have asserted that the further we delve into the depths of history the more polyphony is encountered. This is a new ethnomusicological paradigm.

Traditional polyphony does not represent a cultural invention and does not spread further the more time passes. On the contrary, polyphony is being lost. In other words, historically it must have been quite widespread, and it is fully expected that tribes related to the Georgians had a better knowledge of (and sang) polyphony 2–3 thousand years ago than today. For example's sake, we can recall that polyphony is even lost at present in Meskheti-Javakheti, Lazeti, and some other Georgian regions. A similar trend is clearly noticeable not only in Georgia, and not only in the 19th–20th centuries. It is evident all over the world and I can reference interested readers to my monograph published in the Georgian language where I have cited cases of lost polyphony from various other cultures (Jordania, 2016, see pgs. 111–114).

This supposition is strengthened by the fact that this hypothesis I have expressed as a new ethnomusicological paradigm has already been shared at present by some leading world ethnomusicologists (Bruno Nettl, Simha Arom, Izaly Zemtsovsky), and the acceptance of the greatest ethnomusicology award in Japan in 2009 attests this. So, I see no need to argue this thesis once again. German scholar Rudolf Brandl's idea is in complete contrast to the new paradigm of the origins of polyphony, according to whom the archaic, dissonant polyphony surviving in the Balkans and Caucasian mountains is not archaic at all and was only created at the end of the 19th century in imitation of the sound of church bells (Brandl, 2008). This approach is not all strengthened by the extant facts and does not account for the trend of polyphony being lost all over the world.

Now it is necessary to focus on another problem. Specifically, I want to officially pose a question:

How Old Are Naduri (Harvest) Songs?

Let's attentively observe the term used by Sargon II, "joyful songs". It is something to think about that the term "joyful" not only indicates a song sung by a soloist, but a song accompanying group work, which supposedly takes us to collective singing of the archaic *naduri* type, or more broadly, to be performed during the work process.

For one thing, it is difficult to not notice, or "hear" *naduri* singing, because it is performed exceptionally loud and can be heard quite far, 2–3 kilometers away. Let's also recall that Archangelo Lamberti was actually describing the *naduri* tradition in the 17th century (more in detail later). Apart from the fact of whether Sargon had chanced upon the performance of a song like a *naduri*, he would not have had a doubt that the song was joyful, because the tempo gradually picks up in a *naduri*, even the tonality goes higher (here we must note that this also characterizes the folk songs of other genres, for example, round dances and dance songs), and the labor process is also carried out with ever increasing zeal. According to Apolon Tsuladze, those who had been present at a harvest were asked the next day about not how they had worked, but about how they had passed the time (Tsuladze, 1971).

Here, it is also necessary to recall that per the information of Gurian singers themselves, the *naduri* is an "ancient" and simultaneously, "most complex" song (see *ibid.* Tsuladze, 1971); but regarding specifically as to how old the *naduri* phenomenon might be, no well-grounded ideas have been expressed to date in Georgian ethnomusicology. Now I will attempt to shape my idea.

In a book published by me in 2016 dedicated to the origins of the polyphony phenomenon (*The Genesis of Folk Polyphony in Light of Human Evolution*), I characterized in detail humanity's most ancient polyphonic tradition, the primary goal of which was to lead participants into a trance. I have noted several idiosyncratic features of this ancient, archaic polyphony common to all mankind. Let's briefly discuss these features:

1. Humankind's most ancient singing tradition appears to have been constructed on antiphonal singing principles. Singing by a soloist and a group, or by two groups is one of the strongest universals of humanity's musical culture (Brown & Jordania, 2011). It is found not only in polyphonic, but also in monodic cultures. Therefore, alternating singing is quite expected to have been one of the characteristics of the singing tradition of our ancestors originating from Africa.

2. It is feasible that every group member participated in singing. The more archaic a polyphonic singing tradition is, the clearer it is that those in attendance were not divided into performers and listeners. Listeners becoming a separate group is a much later phenomenon in the history of humankind.

3. Rhythm must have been distinctly shaped. Precisely defined meter and rhythm is universal in most world polyphonic traditions. A sense of rhythm sits deeper within a person's brain than the height-wise definition of a melody (Brown & Jordania, 2011).

4. The singing would have most certainly been connected to dancing, or to rhythmic body movements. Following a rhythm with physical movement is one of the most fascinating phenomena in human psychology. Even today, when people listen to rhythmic music, most begin following the rhythm with their bodies without being aware of it.

5. The use of sounds produced by the hands and feet when accompanying a rhythm would also be

clearly present in our ancestors' musical traditions. Clapping and stomping feet on the ground were probably widely used.

6. The singing performance style, it seems, would have been extremely loud. The best-preserved polyphonic singing traditions in geographic isolates, are usually sung extremely loud.

7. The primary music meter would probably have been a duple meter. Duple meters are dominant in most parts of the world. George Ballanta, the first African folklorist, also said regarding African music that it was always based on a duple meter (Ballanta, 1926).

8. It is feasible that the performance tempo gradually increased. This is also quite widely characteristic of traditional singers who usually increase the tempo when performing songs and dances. A phenomenon such as this is not only a feature of traditional musicians. This is why it's easier to follow another person in a rhythm, than a metronome – when you keep time with a metronome, it seems after some time that the metronome “is slowing down”!

9. Apart from the tempo, the tonality of ancient singing gradually going higher and higher is also something to think about. It is well known that raising tonality causes the emotional power of music to increase. This is widely characteristic for traditional performers, too.

10. Primeval singing would not only have been in a group setting, but also polyphonic, with intense secundal sonorities being preferred in the harmony. It is known that dissonant intervals capture one's attention best of all and have the greatest audio effect on the listener. This is really why dissonant intervals frequently sound out in car horns – they more quickly capture the attention of oblivious or confused pedestrians. The main thing is singing in intensely dissonant seconds is found in the world's most isolated and archaic cultures (Jordania, 2016).

11. Drone polyphony has a good chance of being considered a part of humankind's most ancient musical tradition. It is true that drones are not widely spread in Africa (where there is an abundance of parallel voice leading due to tonal languages), they are still encountered in some African cultures (among the Maasai, Creoles, Pygmies). Drone polyphony, especially when conforming to dissonant seconds, is found in countless isolated regions of the world, once again pointing out the extremely wide distribution of the drone polyphony phenomenon.

12. Even more widespread than drone polyphony is ostinato polyphony. Ostinato, or multiple repetitions of the same phrase, is the nature of the music itself. So, the primacy of ostinato must not be surprising from a dissemination standpoint.

13. The bass function (that of a lower voice) in the early singing tradition probably would not have been distinctly separate. Today, it's the same in Africa's polyphonic traditions, where the drones and ostinato are frequently in the middle of the texture. The same goes for the oldest layer of polyphonic songs in Bulgaria, Latvia, Tibet, Vietnam, and Nuristan (Jordania, 2016). Placing the bass in the middle of the texture in Georgian songs is found in Gurian, Acharan harvest songs, particularly at the start of a naduri in the three-voice section, where a droning bass (*shemkhmobari*) is in the middle of the texture. Even more, three-voice (without bass) harvest songs are also found in Georgia, particularly in the mountainous areas of Guria.

14. Yodeling (known as *krimanchuli* in Georgia), might also have been a constituent part of the an-

cient singing tradition. It's true that yodeling is not present in many countries, yet it is still quite broadly represented, and being the main thing, is found in many geographically isolated regions (the African jungle, Europe's mountainous regions, Pacific Ocean islands).

15. Verbal texts would have been used quite sparingly, or not at all in singing. Let's not forget we are speaking about a such historically distant period when articulated speech had not even been formed at all. Therefore, repeatable melodic, rhythmic formulas similar to mantras would have probably been used instead of words. Repeated verbal formulas are powerful mechanisms for transporting a person into an altered mental state. Textless songs (or songs constructed on glossolalia) are found in countless cultures, especially in the more archaic layers of a culture. For example, verbal texts are generally not used in Pygmy songs.

16. There's a good chance that such an ancient singing tradition might have been constructed in an anhemitonic, pentatonic mode.

17. And finally, those participating in the performance process went into a trance where each group member lost their individuality and became part of a much larger entity or group. Going into a trance and advancing group interests were the final goals of the entire musical, choreographic action.

This was how the final conclusion sounded in my book:

“Therefore, this was a loud song performed by all the members of a large group and structured around antiphonal alternation. The rhythm was clearly made distinct in the melody and harmony with the performers clapping, stomping their feet on the ground, and throwing rocks at each other. It generally sounded polyphonic, where harsh secundal intervals played a leading role. The performance tempo, as well as the tonal center gradually increased and went higher, and became more and more dynamic and emotional. Magical words similar to mantras were used in place of any verbal text, the repetition of which helped participants go into a trance. Ostinato and drones were the foundations of a polyphonic texture. The singing was accompanied by dancing, which might have gone on for several hours. Having participants go into a collective trance state was the common goal of this ancient performance”.

I want the reader to know that I had written this entire characterization without even thinking of naduri songs (apart from mentioning harvest songs without a bass part). The first person to direct my attention to this similarity was Sandro Natadze, a member of the Adilei Ensemble, remarkable singer, and unsurpassed expert of harvest songs, in 2022, for which I thank him tremendously. It was Sandro Natadze himself who wrote me an extensive, special letter scrupulously providing proof to me that naduri songs fit directly in with my characterization of polyphony's archaic type.

So, let's ask a question, how old is naduri singing? Is it possible to surmise that King Sargon provided us with the first description of an archaic naduri almost 3,000 years ago? I view this hypothesis quite seriously, especially since all the attributes of ancient polyphony are in fact evident in naduri songs even today. Apart from this, a harvest song successfully implements its ancient function to make participants oblivious to their fatigue, bring them together through the fantastic feeling of a collective identity, when they go into a trance and display stronger physical prowess and endurance.

Accordingly, we can conclude that it is plausible that a song accompanying the collective labor of tribes related to the Georgians is reflected in Sargon's information. Today we know these songs as na-

duris, but it is impossible to say what they might have been called 2,800 years ago, because language changes much more rapidly and easily than the strongest elements of musical art (polyphony, dissonances, drones, ostinato, meter, rhythm. See Jordania, 2016).

Xenophon

The Greek historian and military leader Xenophon describes the journey and battles of 10,000 Greek mercenaries on a special mission in 401 BC in his historical documentary work *Anabasis*. They were hired by the Persian King Cyrus the Younger so the Greeks could help him overthrow his brother Artaxerxes from the Persian throne and make him king instead. The leader of the Greek army was the Persian general Clearchus. The battle of Cunaxa (close to Babylon) was the central event and culmination of the mission, which took place on September 3, 401 BC.

The Greek mercenaries fought well (according to Xenophon, only one soldier was wounded), but it became known mid-battle that Cyrus the Younger himself had perished, thereby negating the primary reason for the Greek mission. After this, many adventures befell the Greek army, including the central events of betrayal, seemingly inviting army leaders to a feast, imprisoning them, and punishing them with death (among those put to death was the Persian general Clearchus, who led the 10,000 mercenaries). In the end, the large and well-armed Greek army found itself on enemy territory without any supplies and food and was forced to go to the northwest to return to Greece via the Black Sea region. Therefore, the Greek forces covered large territories over the course of their mission, including the territory of the Mossynoeci, a Colchian tribe.

The Mossynoeci, apart from Cyrus the Younger and his brother, were embroiled in an internal conflict and the Greek army helped one of the sides win against the other. It was during this attack, more precisely, before and after the attack, that Xenophon describes the singing of the Mossynoeci. This was clearly a battle song: “One of them (a soldier) began a strange (?) song, the remaining soldiers joined him and stomped their feet at the same time. With such an orderly march they set out towards the opposing side to fight”. After the battle, “the victors decapitated the slaughtered foes, mounted the heads on spears, and showed them to the defeated enemy with singing and dancing”. By the way, the first attack in which the Greeks partially participated was won by the opposing Mossynoeci and they routed the attackers, including the Greeks. Xenophon specially notes that this was the first time the Greek warriors were routed all throughout the entire expedition.

Let’s return to singing. There have been many debates among Georgian scholars as to what is meant in Xenophon’s words by “strange singing”. If Shalva Aslanishvili’s skepticism is recalled, we must account for the scholar thinking within the paradigm extant at that time, according to which it was impossible to imagine the existence of any polyphony in the deep historical past. Of course, this view must be rejected, since the first examples of musical notation from the Sumerians and Hittites, as well as written sources from Egypt, indicate the existence of polyphonic music among ancient civilizations, particularly among the Sumerians, Hittites, and ancient Egyptians (Zaks, 1937; Kilmer, 1974; Hickmann, 1952; Jordania, 1989). It is fascinating that when these scholars made some findings regarding the polyphony of these ancient written works, these examples were criticized based on the standpoint that it was im-

possible to seriously discuss polyphony existing at such an ancient time (see, for example, West, 1994).

As in the case of Sargon II's information, almost exactly the same picture is obtained as a result of analyzing the info supplied by Xenophon. In principle, a collective musical action is described in both cases (a "spectacle", it may be said), in which music played a crucial role in creating psychological unity among group members. In one case, the joining together of participants for an extensive physical labor process is evident (Sargon II), in the second case, however it is for battle (Xenophon). Both are directly connected to taking participants into a trance, the psychological unity of group members. This should not be surprising because today, in the 21st century, professional Western soldiers equipped with modern gear, usually resort to an ancient means of achieving psychological unity before heading out on combat missions: they conduct group dance and singing seances, resulting in their psychological mood completely changing, with any fear of death or pain disappearing. Unfortunately, this extremely effective and unique phenomenon has not been appropriately studied even today, although I had introduced the concept "military trance" in 2011 (see Jordania, 2016).

By the way, the idea that Xenophon was describing the polyphonic campaign songs of the Mossynoeci, of Kartvelian tribes, does not belong to me. This idea was expressed before I was born. It was expressed by Dimitri Janelidze, a remarkable expert in Georgian spectacles (Janelidze, 1948: 31). In his opinion, Xenophon's words about the Mossynoeci singing "with some kind (unique) melody", implied polyphony for the scholar. The well-known musicologist Shalva Aslanishvili did not agree with Janelidze, who thought that any talk of polyphony in that period was premature (Aslanishvili, 1954: 13). Of course, as previously noted, according to the old, traditional paradigm of the origins of polyphony, in which polyphony was deemed to be a later cultural discovery, Shalva Aslanishvili's opinion was entirely justified, because today, such a simple approach ("first one, then many") is completely unfounded according to the new 21st-century paradigm. Therefore, I concur with Dimitri Janelidze's hypothesis concerning the existence of polyphonic military songs among the Mossynoeci, although having approached a discussion of this information from a completely different angle.

Hopefully, Georgian readers will not consider the aim of my discourse to be a substantiation of the antiquity of Georgian polyphony. Polyphony seems to generally be a common characteristic of ancient human behavior and the further we delve into human history; the more polyphonic traditions are encountered. This ancient singing tradition, on one hand, has survived remarkably in Georgia, and on the other hand, has attained astounding heights of development there as well.

Arcangelo Lamberti

Since my study only deals with information and ideas from foreign authors and scholars, it is necessary to leave out more than 2,000 years after Xenophon and cross over to Archangelo Lamberti's information concerning Georgian (Megrelian) songs.

In contrast to King Sargon of Assyria and Xenophon the Greek, who only had to spend a brief time with Georgian tribes, Lamberti spent 18 years in Georgia, knew the geography, history, and ethnographic reality of Samegrelo quite well. Although because he was Catholic, he frequently expresses dismay about Orthodoxy in Georgia and might be overly critical in some issues. Lamberti arrived in Georgia

in October 1631 (not even two years after the death of Giorgi Saakadze), and provided us with a vivid description of Georgia. In his own writings, Lamberti first notes the well-known political problem of Turkey standing between Europe and Colchis, thereby making contact with Christian Colchis (Samegrelo) more difficult. The Italian Lamberti also frequently makes complaints about the work of Greek clergy members hindering him in spreading the Catholic faith. The mistakes made by the authors of old sources are pointed out by Lamberti. He names the short time spent in Georgia and not knowing the language as reasons (Lamberti possibly knew Megrelian or Georgian, at least partially in any case). Glaring geographical discrepancies are named in works by Arianne, Strabo, Polybius, and Theophrastus. As far as I know, no information about music is found in the sources, which is why they have not been discussed.

Lamberti mentions the idea widespread in the Antique world regarding the origins of the Colchians. According to Ammianus Marcellinus, the Colchians are descendants of the old Egyptians. Several arguments corroborating the relations between the Colchians and Egyptians are listed by Lamberti. As far as nothing is said about music between them, I will no longer continue to discuss this topic. By the way, it's true that Lamberti does not mention it, yet as noted by Hickman, the ancient Egyptians also had drone polyphony like the Colchians (Hickmann, 1952).

It is intriguing that if not for Sargon, Lamberti also focuses especially on naduri songs almost 2,500 years later. This, it seems, was defined by a song's popularity, number of participants, and loud performance. Let's hear it from Lamberti himself:

“Due to the humidity, weeds quickly grow here, and great labor is needed to eradicate them. If the weeds are allowed to grow for a few days, they multiply as such that they completely smother the planted crop. That's why as soon as millet pokes out of the ground (corn had still not been introduced in Georgia at this time, J.J.), it needs to be hoed right away, because the task is urgent and the landowner can no longer do it with just his own crew, neighbors must help him. Whoever has planted a field and must hoe it, invites those to help who still do not have to hoe their own fields. These people are assisted by others in their own time. Since this great labor must be endured by a man in terrible heat, such a method has been thought of to help him that you would think the entire village is feasting. This method consists of three things: the field workers, singing, and abundant food provided by the landowner. The work crew frequently consists of 50–60 people equipped with hoes. To encourage them at that time, the landowner stands in front with a hoe and hoes like everyone else”.

“The song accompanying the work crew has been invented to not simply spur on this joyful gathering, but so that they can work quickly. They have a special song for this to which they match the hoeing to, like dancing to an instrument: the more the song tempo is increased, the faster the hoeing goes. For this, two singers stand at the front and start the song. These leaders are each given food rations to hasten the hoeing of the others. They have quite an abundance of food since this is the only compensation for their labor. Throughout the day, food is brought 3 times to them in the field. At nightfall, a dinner is prepared for them at the landowner's home, which is quite generous. At this time, all concerns regarding work are left behind; they sit until the middle of the night spending the time eating, drinking, and singing. It's such a wondrous sight when they finish hoeing at sundown and go to the landowner's house like soldiers under a single banner with hoes slung over their shoulders. They slowly march in six or eight

columns, singing all the while and entering the landowner's yard with great pageantry. They are seated all around upon entering the yard and food is brought to them right away".

It is well evident from this account that the naduri songs widespread in Colchis (Samegrelo) during this period are in fact no different from the ones known to us today:

1. The song was performed by a large group (50–60 participants are mentioned by Lamberti).
2. The workers (and singers) were divided into 2 groups and thus sang.
3. The naduri was a special song for working.
4. The hoeing rhythm was directly connected to the song's rhythm.

5. The two groups involved in the naduri process were led by two singers in front just like in the naduri tradition known to us.

6. Leading the singing was exceptionally valued and there was special compensation allotted to the leads. Lamberti seemingly says that it was two times the amount of food, but this is less probable, because, as evident from the account, there was more than enough food for all. The naduri singing leaders might have taken some amount of profit (millet or some other commodity) home with them.

Of course, the names of the voice parts are not mentioned by Lamberti (*gamkivani*, *shemkhmobari*, *mtkmeli*, etc.), for which he would have needed more refined knowledge, neither does he speak about polyphony, yet it is fascinating that Lamberti's account does not contradict one detail of the naduri tradition known at present.

The Megrelians' excessive love of wine is frequently criticized by Lamberti. Here's how he describes what takes place after returning to the harvest host's home:

"The best wine is saved for when they have a hoeing session. Whereas since this wine would be unable to escape being drunk, such a trick was thought up by them: this wine is offered to St. George on the condition that the vessel storing the wine is not opened until the feast of St. Peter and Paul. Truly, no one even dares to touch the wine until this time because the priests tell the people that whoever violates the promise made before St. George will not survive alive. On the day of the St. Peter and Paul holiday, however, which precedes the hoeing, the *kvevri* must be opened with great fanfare. For this, a priest dressed in clerical vestments is invited to the wine cellar, he says a couple prayers over the top of the *kvevri* and after this opens the vessel. From there he pours some wine into a small jug that is sent to be offered at St. George's church. Following this the wine can be consumed".

Singing at a wedding is also described by Lamberti: "When this ritual is completed at church, everyone goes home with great gusto and joy in order to put on a huge feast. Everyone sits down, the men on one side and the women on the other. The bride and groom are seated in a distinguished and honored place: the groom is on the men's side and the bride – on the women's side. This is how the entire night is usually spent in eating, drinking, and singing".

Lamberti is clearly critical of excessive partying within the context of religious holidays:

"When the clergy's rites and customs have been followed, many things then appear which are simultaneously humorous and unfortunate. This is said specifically regarding the Megrelians' holidays and fasting, which they are mocked for by the Turks and unbelievers themselves. Their feast days and fasts originate from the time of the Hebrews, about which we are informed by Jeremiah, when he mournfully

says, ‘Their enemies seeing this mocked the things they did.’ Megrelians consider it their holy obligation to hold as great a gathering as possible on a holiday and stay for as long as possible at the supra. They give no thought to prayers or the sacraments: on the contrary, they spurn every rule of God and man, greatly insult God’s glory, and try to only have a fun time. Drunkenness, sacrilege, impropriety, dancing, and discordant singing are what they crown their holidays with”.

The words “discordant singing” used here should probably be less viewed as proof of polyphony, it more characterizes drunk singers, although, of course, the existence of polyphony during this period would not be negated by the earlier paradigm. An account of the brilliant feast day of Easter is provided by Lamberti, including the mention of a specific hymn (“The Angels in Heaven”) with the critical commentary frequently characteristic of him (again you are reminded that Lamberti is Catholic and internally opposes Orthodox rites):

“No one in Odishi knows if giving a confession and receiving communion are necessary on Easter. Everyone is only fixated on how to prepare more food and various meat dishes for this day, so more time can be spent at the supra. Still, they go to church early, more due to hunger than love of God, because the earlier they go to church, the earlier they can break the fast and after Great Lent greedily fall upon the longed-for meat. It is a good two hours before sunrise that they go to church and first light numerous candles at the graves of each loved one in the cemetery. Then the church officiant, whether this be a priest, abbot, or bishop, puts on their clerical vestments, holds a candle, goes into the altar area, and loudly declares the Resurrection of Christ to the people through these words repeated thrice:

Isminde, Isminde – Ismine, ismine (Listen, listen)

Tcazo ctiso – Katsi ghvtisa (Man of God)

Nadiri ctiso – Nadiri ghvtisa (Beast of God)

(Tchenzi Zchiso Ctqualgâ) – (three unclear words)

Christi adghâ ghigârodes – Kriste aghsdga gikharodes (Christ is risen, rejoice).

And the people respond: Grace to the proclaimer.

The clergy then comes down from the altar and begins the litany. Two men go before them and play two bugles. They are followed by a third holding a flag. Following them are all the people holding lit candles displaying immense joy and pleasure through their gait, appearance, movement, and voices, and they sing the Paschal hymn:

‘The angels in heaven praise Your Resurrection, O Christ, Savior. Make us also here on earth worthy, to glorify You with pure hearts.’ ... This hymn is sung by everyone from rote memory all while circling the church. They circle the church like this 3 times and then enter it, where the liturgy is conducted in haste. At the end of liturgy, a roast lamb on a spit appears among the people in the middle of the church, which is distributed to the people right when the service ends. Each person, of course, gets a small bite and this morsel is devoured right then, to boot. This is how they have communion on this glorious day.

After liturgy, everyone hustles home to spend the entire day feasting. Therefore, they don’t meet each other in the village square, nor is the church open for prayers. The people think they’ve gotten quite worn out through praying and fasting during Great Lent, and they must now compensate for what they’ve lacked by merrymaking. That’s why the church is all locked up. Only on the day after Easter do they

pray by commemorating all the departed, as described above, in the eleventh hour. They celebrate for the entire week. Their celebration is not expressed through inactivity, but in even eating meat on Friday as per the Greek custom.

The third fast begins on August 1st to commemorate the Dormition of the Virgin. Even though this fast is not a long one, only lasting two weeks, they still have a hard time with it because it is forbidden to eat anything but fruits and vegetables, even fish. Over the course of these two weeks, there is a custom in Samegrelo that the men and women, young and old, leave their homes for the fields at nightfall, and there spend most of the night dancing and singing, creating such a ruckus, that anyone remaining at home is unable to close their eyes and rest.

I have been present at such times and I desired to find out how this custom came to be and what its purpose is, yet I was unable to find out anything from anyone. In response, I was only told that this is from time immemorial. But I think the origin of this custom must have a simple explanation by using what is told to us by Damascene. He says that when the Virgin was taken to heaven, the sweet sound of singing angels was heard at her grave for several days. Since this story is quite widespread among them, thanks to their priests and with help from Damascene's book, which is translated into Georgian – it is easily possible a nightly vigil with chanting was established in imitation of the angelic singing to glorify the Virgin in olden times. Whereas because every good deed is poisoned by the devil and every good beginning gradually transforms into great evil, I think the same happened with the Megrelians: this chanting was first established to glorify the Mother of God, but it later turned into a diabolical orgy. It's true, now only secular songs are sung and along with this, such things are committed by them in the darkness of night that offend God even more". Lamberti tactfully does not name what they specifically did in the dark.

The Megrelian *zari* tradition is also described by Lamberti, which as it turns out, was performed by two choirs:

"... The biggest room possible is selected and the deceased is placed on a rug in a corner there. After this, several men with good voices are chosen and they comprise the two *zari* choirs. Every mourner is accompanied by them from the door to the deceased. First, of course, the closest relatives begin mourning. The mourner stands barefoot and naked above the waist in between the two *zari* groups and thus approaches the dead person. The *zari* singers sing in a quiet tone, seemingly singing, yet crying; whereas no words are uttered and only "Ohi, ohi, ohi" is cried out.

It is interesting that another word is used in Megrelian *zari* variants widespread today, "Vai, vai" and not "ohi, ohi", although it is also plausible that Lamberti had jotted it down incorrectly and his "ohi" must be read as "oi", from which it is easy to reconstruct a possible "voi" and "vai". In any case, as it is seen, there are many fascinating facts regarding Georgian folk music in Archangelo Lamberti's writings which have not been fairly brought to light in Georgian ethnomusicology. For the Soviet ideology, of course, only Lamberti's writings concerning the *naduri* were acceptable and this is a reason for Lamberti's other information being comparatively unknown to Georgian readers.

A Czech Musician in Love with Georgian Music

It is true that the musical director of the first Georgian ethnographic choir “Kartuli Koro” (The Georgian Choir) and professional musician Josef Navrátil was not a researcher. But he made a tremendous contribution to the popularization of Georgian music. Navrátil arrived in Tbilisi on a tour in 1880, and enthralled by the country, forever remained in Georgia. He was invited to direct the choir by Lado Aghniashvili, the choir founder, and the Georgian song concert held by him in 1886 evoked great interest from society, because in fact, only urban songs were heard in 19th-century Tbilisi. Following this concert, Ilia wrote his well-known essay “Georgian Folk Singing”, in which Georgian polyphony is differentiated by him from European and Asian music and is, he hopes, of great interest for those studying music theory. This was the first concert of Georgian folk singing laying the foundations for it being performed on stage. Many Georgians partook of traditional Georgian folk singing in this choir, including Zakaria Paliashvili. This choir was heard by Dimitri Arakishvili in 1893 in the North Caucasian city of Armavir and he decided to become a musician.

Navrátil himself actively transcribed folk songs, and as a child of his own time, looked down upon the oral means of handing down folk singing. He attempted to establish a European “order” in this endeavor, for which he first transcribed the songs into notation and only then “taught” the Georgian songs to the choir singers using the score.

Navrátil passed away in Georgian in 1913, he’s buried in Tbilisi.

Russian Scholars of Georgian Music

Georgia was part of the Russian Empire from 1801 to 1917, and afterwards, during the years 1921–1990, as one of the republics making up the Soviet Union. Therefore, it is natural that European innovations and concepts were introduced in Georgia via Russia over a long course of time. Probably one of the first published articles on Georgian folk music belongs to professional Russian musicians (there were already several works on ecclesiastical music). This concerns a work published in 1895 by Mikheil Ippolitov-Ivanov, which will be spoken of a little later. Kristofor Grozdov’s and Vasil Teptsov’s collection work, and compositional arrangements and propositions by Nikoloz Klenovsky and Pyotr Tchaikovsky also must be noted. Let us first remark upon the work of the earliest professional Russian composers.

Kristofor Grozdov lived for years in Georgia, even getting married here. In 1889, he transcribed some Megrelian songs into notation (without a phonograph). Along with some Svan songs transcribed by Vasil Teptsov in 1887, these songs have survived through a manuscript. The song texts are transliterated in Russian script, the vocal lines are frequently accompanied by chonguri chords. One of the songs is also complemented with a drawing of a Svan chuniri. The collection contains only songs, so it is impossible to speak about the authors’ views. Several articles were also published by Grozdov and Teptsov (Тепцов, 1890; Grozdov, 1894). Some articles by Arsen Koreshcheko (1897, 1898) can also be mentioned.

Nikolai Klenovsky (1857–1915) was a remarkable musician, conductor, and composer. Two supremely talented conservatory students were praised by Tchaikovsky – Klenovsky and Tanev. Klenovsky was also lauded by Rubinstein. He successfully made some arrangements of folk songs and participated in the first staging of *Eugene Onegin*. In 1893, Klenovsky held the first ethnographical concert in Russia

to great acclaim, where he performed various folk songs in his own arrangements (harmonizations). In 1894, Nikolai Klenovsky replaced Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov as director of the Tbilisi Musical Institute. Here, he busied himself with harmonizing Georgian songs (although traditionally they were already polyphonic) and was partially devoted to collecting and working on them. In Tbilisi, he got a hold of some notated transcriptions *The Chants and Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom in the Georgian (Kakhetian) Mode*. The transcriptions had been done by A.G. Mrevlov at the beginning of the 1840s, having been recorded from Archimandrite Sophron of Shuamta Monastery.

Klenovsky did an entire arrangement of the Liturgy and took the transcript with him to the Moscow Synodal Institute. The high artistic level of the work was noted by the musicians S.V. Smolensky, A.D. Kastalsky, and V.S. Orlov. Institute director Smolensky right then handed over the manuscript to be printed. Smolensky ecstatically wrote to Klenovsky that the synod choir had already performed the works three times to great success. The demand for the works was so immense that they had begun performing them before the official publication. In 1901, this liturgy sounded out at Uspensky Cathedral (the Kremlin), also with much success. Klenovsky wrote to a friend, Kristephor Grozdov that the works have been performed for half a year at Uspensky Cathedral and were well loved by the Russian parish. The works were published in 1902 and were met with tremendous enthusiasm. Unfortunately, despite the great acclaim and resulting clamor for the works, the original soul of the Georgian harmony was lost in Klenovsky's harmonization (his arrangements were harshly criticized by Dimitri Arakishvili (Araq'ishvili, 1903). In 1902 Klenovsky took up the post as deputy director of the Imperial Chapel, for which he moved to the Russian capital of St. Petersburg; still as evident from his personal letters, he regretted leaving Tbilisi and moving to Petersburg. Another thing Klenovsky deserves great credit for is that Zakaria Paliashvili was influenced in becoming a composer through him.

Among the Russian composers interested in Georgian music, Pyotr Tchaikovsky for sure must be recalled, who had been to Tbilisi 5 times (between spring of 1886 and fall of 1890). He was enraptured by the country's beauty, abundance, and musicality. Tbilisi reminded Tchaikovsky of Italy, particular Florence. It is no coincidence that the composer had worked on the sextet *Souvenir de Florence* while in Tbilisi. Tchaikovsky's usage of the Georgian "Iavnana" melody in the ballet *The Nutcracker* is a known fact, which had been supplied to him by Ippolitov-Ivanov, although it is also known that he had no knowledge of folk polyphony and had reworked the melody in an Oriental style. In general, Tchaikovsky had an immense love for Tbilisi, recalling it as a "sweet dream" and writing to Eduard Napravnik in a letter, that "if I were younger, I would live here forever".

The most prominent, profound, and noticeable trace left in the history of Georgian music was probably left by Mikheil Ippolitov-Ivanov. He lived in Georgia starting in 1883, was interested in Georgian culture. For years (1884–1893) he was the main conductor of the Tbilisi Opera. From 1893 he is again in Russia, where he was a professor and rector at Moscow Conservatory. After this, already during the Soviet period 1924–25, he became the rector of Tbilisi Conservatory. His opera *Treason* after the play by Sumbatashvili-Yuzhin, was staged in independent Georgia in 1919, being dedicated to Georgia's national freedom struggle. A student of Rimsky-Korsakov, Ippolitov-Ivanov himself pursued a successful career as a pedagogue (Zakaria Paliashvili was a student of his). Following 1925 he is again in Moscow as the conductor of the Moscow Bolshoi Theater.

An article published in Moscow in 1895, “Georgian Folk Singing and Its Current State”, holds a special place in Ippolitov-Ivanov’s heritage. The research portion of the article consists of 16 pages and is accompanied by sheet music for 12 songs and art romances. Unfortunately, Ippolitov-Ivanov’s findings were not based on recordings of Georgian village songs, but mostly on musical impressions obtained while living in Tbilisi, on urban songs (still, as far as we know, he had recorded some songs in Kakheti). This is why Ippolitov-Ivanov came to the incorrect conclusion that the development of Georgian folk song polyphony was greatly influenced by Russian military songs (*saldaturi*).

It was symbolic that these findings by Ippolitov-Ivanov were criticized by the academic Dimitri Arakishvili, the founder of Georgian folklore studies, who pointed out the erroneous nature of Ippolitov-Ivanov’s findings, explaining that he lacked material. Even more symbolic was Ippolitov-Ivanov’s admission of the justness of Arakishvili’s criticism and he remarked that if he had had the appropriate material, he would have come to completely different conclusions. This was done by him in the foreword to Dimitri Arakishvili’s pioneering work published in Kutaisi in 1925, *The History of Georgian Music*.

Much later, some widely known things regarding Georgian folk singing were expressed by another Russian composer. This was Igor Stravinsky, one of the greatest figures of 20th-century music who was captivated by Georgian singing (especially from Guria). His famous remarks said to the American conductor Robert Kraft in a conversation were published in the popular magazine *America* in 1967. It is fascinating and symbolic that Stravinsky was the first non-Georgian composer to openly express his delight in complex Gurian singing. The fact of complex Gurian songs not being established in the creative work of Dimitri Arakishvili and Zakaria Paliashvili must be pointed out. It seems the musical language of Gurian singing was more innovatory than the musical language of Georgian classicists working professionally, thus the reason why this amazing phenomenon was appraised in this way by Igor Stravinsky, the famous, innovative composer of the 20th century. It was also probably influential that Stravinsky was younger and belonged to a different generation of composers than Arakishvili and Paliashvili. By the way, despite the expressed admiration, Stravinsky did not use the musical language of Gurian singing, probably because he did not know the tradition well enough and was already more than 80 years old when he listened to Gurian songs.

German and Austrian Musicologists and the First Phonograph Recordings of Georgian Singing

The study of the traditional music of the world’s peoples was given an immense stimulus by the invention of the phonograph. It became possible to discuss the folk music of completely different regions all over the world. The feverish activity of recording various traditions intensified throughout the world in the first years of the 20th century. By the way, this not only had tremendous cultural influence on the development of ethnomusicology (or as our discipline was called earlier, comparative musicology), it also gave rise to the myth of the “golden age” of traditional performance. This myth was associated with bestowing a special, legendary status on the first recorded folk singers. For the first time in the history of humankind, it became possible to save something sung by a singer and have it sound out vibrantly in a different country and epoch! This was the acquisition of true performance immortality which enshrined the first recorded performers in the glow of a people’s cultural legends.

By the way, this psychological phenomenon not only affected folk performers, but also professional singers. For example, the names of Enrico Caruso, Feodor Chaliapin, or the Georgian singer Vano Sarajishvili remain legendary to this day.

It is intriguing that the first phonograph recordings of Georgian folk songs belong to Dimitri Arakishvili and Zakaria Paliashvili. Unfortunately, their recordings are deemed lost today. Despite numerous attempts by Anzor Erkomaishvili, it has not been ruled out that they might be hiding away in some dusty archive corner in Moscow or Petersburg.

On the other hand, recordings made of Georgian prisoners during World War I have survived well. This material is well attested in special digital releases and is accessible to Georgian or foreign scholars (see, for example, corresponding works by Suzanne Ziegler, Frank and Gerda Lechleitner based on phonograph archive material from Berlin and Vienna in the bibliography and they are available to everyone via the Tbilisi Conservatoire Center for Traditional Polyphony Research website: polyphony.ge).

Historically, the first German scholar interested in Georgian (and Caucasian) music was Adolph Dirr, an educated philologist, linguist, and ethnologist. In comparison to other German scholars, Dirr lived a few years in Tbilisi, from 1900 to 1913. Intrigued in Caucasian languages, Dirr also visited the North Caucasus several times and made significant contributions in the study of their languages. It is true that Dirr was no musician, yet he was fascinated by Georgian musical traditions and had even published two collections with Georgian songs. Songs recorded and published by others were used by Dirr in these collections and he tried to provide information about them to European readers (Dirr, 1910, 1914). Dirr's recordings made it possible for Georgian music to be included in the international academic community at a time when no other sources of Georgian folk music were available in Europe. Hornbostel used Dirr's recorded material for his own studies. Apart from this, Dirr was actively involved in recording the musical traditions of Caucasian prisoners on phonograph during WWI in the years 1916–18. Besides Dirr, we can cursorily mention a well-known book by Bucher *Work and Rhythm*, where together with other songs, the author also mentions and examines Georgian work songs (Bucher, 1919).

The songs recorded from Georgian prisoners during WWI are especially important to us because the songs were not recorded from any special, recognized master singers, but from peasants taken prisoner. Several works were published based on the recordings, including the distinguished Robert Lach, one of the leading representatives of the Berlin school of comparative musicology (Lach, 1928, 1931).

It must be noted that a book with two CDs *Georgian Prisoner Songs, recorded on Wax Cylinder in Germany in 1916–1918* was prepared and published jointly by the Tbilisi Conservatoire Center for Traditional Polyphony Research and Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv.

Robert Lach's work became the foundation upon which a large share of studies by European scholars were based (including works by Siegfried Nadel and Marius Schneider). Lach's method was interesting. Before recording on phonograph, he would usually transcribe a song into notation from singers, and as a rule, lose his cool due to the changes constantly made by the singers when repeating a song. Lach was angry with the singers being unable to precisely repeat the same song, and they constantly did improvisations, regarding which one singer responded: "This might be how you do things in Europe, but to us these variants are the same song, because you can sing the song like this, or like that". (Lach, 1931: 14). By

the way, it must be pointed out that the Georgian prisoners with whom Lach worked were from various Georgian regions: 11 of 13 singers were from Western Georgia and only two were from Eastern Georgia.

The most significant work based on the recordings done of Georgian prisoners during WWI, is clearly Siegfried Nadel's fundamental *Georgian Singing* (1933). Nadel was an educated musician, having also thought of a musical career (wanting to be a conductor and composer), he even defended a dissertation in 1925 (at the age of 22) about the perception of consonance. His teachers were Robert Lach and Guido Adler. He had a relationship and correspondence with Erich Moritz von Hornbostel and Marius Schneider. Even more, he began his research activity really as an ethnomusicologist, and from a modern understanding, as an evolutionary musicologist (the title of one of his works published in 1930 and pertinent even today is "The Origins of Music"). But later, Nadel gradually deviated towards anthropology, sociology, and psychology. Nadel's life ended while comparatively young (53 years old) in Canberra, Australia.

In his own work about Georgian singing, as was expected, Nadel especially focused on the diversity of polyphonic forms in Georgia and in fact introduced a new theory in European musicology concerning the probable Georgian roots of European polyphony. Clearly, Nadel was quite knowledgeable in the traditions of the Caucasian region, aware that polyphony had limited distribution in the Caucasus. In particular, the existence of polyphony among the Ossetians was known to him, although the presence of polyphony among the Turkic-language Balkars and Karachays, as well as among the Circassians, was unknown to everyone, including Nadel. Apart from the recordings made during WWI, Nadel also had collections from Dimitri Arakishvili, Zakaria Paliashvili, and Ia Kargareli, and he was assisted by a Davit Ghambashidze in getting acquainted with Georgian and Russian material. (For more detail on this topic, see Susanne Ziegler's (2010: 97–105).

In short, Nadel, who enjoyed tremendous authority among social anthropologists and does so even today, introduced and established a revolutionary idea through his own book in 1933 that if it was possible to speak of some influences between Georgian and European polyphony, it is more probable to say that Georgian polyphony influenced the European. As already pointed out, Nadel relied upon Lach's and his own deciphered material, as well as on the collections published by Arakishvili, Paliashvili, and Ia Kargareli, i.e., we can say that he was quite well informed. Even more, as far as it is known, Nadel had intended to come again to Georgia, even acquiring his own phonograph for this purpose, but his living conditions changed, and his desire remained just a desire...

Nadel's newly published book was discussed by Marius Schneider, the greatest world expert of 20th-century polyphony, in a special review (Schneider, 1935). During the same timeframe, Schneider also became the author of a fundamental book in two volumes *The History of Polyphony* (Schneider, 1934, 1935, see also Schneider, 1969). We must certainly pay attention that Schneider's book was not only devoted to the history of folk polyphony, but also that of professional polyphony. Therefore, the first volume of his book was dedicated to folk traditions (with the title *Primitive Cultures*), the second, however, to professional European polyphony.

It is extremely fascinating that Schneider's initial impression of Nadel's book was negative (as expressed in Schneider's words, "the author goes quite far"). Schneider soon altered his views, perhaps after becoming better acquainted with some musical examples. In 1940 he published a special article on

the possible influence of Caucasian polyphony on professional European polyphony, and in 1969, in an already expanded 3-volume edition of the 2-volume book, he relegated the central place to Caucasian polyphony. It is interesting that in the article published in 1940, Nadel is not even mentioned by Schneider (although, in fact, he reiterates his ideas), whereas in the second publication of *The History of Polyphony* released in 1969, he only hints at his name.

If Nadel's work became known among Georgian scholars early on – this was indubitably thanks to the great Ivane Javakhishvili, who extensively discussed Nadel's book in his own epochal work *The Fundamental Issues of the History of Georgian Music* (1938). Schneider's work remained basically unknown in Georgian folklore studies. WWII might have affected this, during which works of the German Schneider wound up outside the interests (and opportunities) of Soviet scholars. By the way, our discussion of Nadel would not be complete, if it is not pointed that he was the first to notice that harmonic verticalities have importance in the formation of Georgian modes (scales). We were recently reminded of this important idea by another German scholar Frank Scherbaum in a long, and today, actively ongoing debate held regarding the Georgian modes (Scherbaum et al., 2020; Jordania, 2023).

By the way, Schneider's contradictory life as a scholar is intriguing. Following the dismissal of Kurt Sachs, he was appointed as director of the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv (Sachs, as a Jew, was dismissed from his post in 1933). Despite Schneider having significant authority in fascist Germany, he was unable to help Sachs and his two-volume book *The History of Polyphony* was publicly burned by the Germans. The profound ideological basis for this was that, according to Schneider, polyphony was not a European "invention". Schneider's problems did not end with this. The Gestapo began compiling a dossier on the free-thinking scholar and he was forced to leave Germany in 1944. Schneider was principally opposed to communism and atheism, therefore his choice for emigration was Franco's fascist Spain. Schneider was found at fault by many European and American colleagues for his anti-communist views. Schneider was harshly criticized, for example, by Alan Lomax, who like many American leftist intellectuals, was imbued with great sympathy for the Soviet Union.

Our conversation about Schneider would not be complete if I don't explain to the reader the place of Georgian polyphony within Schneider's theory. For one thing, it must be known that Schneider almost always never used the term "Georgian polyphony", he used the expression "Caucasian polyphony". A reason for this was probably that Georgian examples were presented in his writings (based more on Robert Lach's examples) according to ethnographic regions (Svan, Imeretian, Gurian, etc.), with some examples of Ossetian polyphony being mentioned among them. As I realize, Schneider was not well-versed in the ethnic makeup of the Caucasian region, therefore he was wholly interested in the Caucasus and Caucasian polyphony, and not directly in Georgian polyphony. Apart from this, it is also probable that "Georgian polyphony" was not mentioned by Schneider because he didn't want his thoughts associated with Nadel's book. By the way, Schneider, like Nadel, had never been to Georgia, and if Nadel had intended to come, it had not even crossed Schneider's mind.

Apart from this, for Schneider, Georgia was not at all the region where polyphony might have been "created" and from where it spread out into the world. In his opinion, the original "appearance" of polyphony took place in Eastern Asia, where even today there are many centers of polyphony (Schnei-

der, 1934–35, 1969). As per his belief, polyphony was created in Southeast Asia and spread from there towards the West as a progressive cultural phenomenon. He was convinced that polyphony came to the Caucasus from Iran (which is monodic today), and only after this did the cultural “migration” of polyphony from the Caucasus to Europe occur.

Of course, according to the new paradigm recently accepted, this global theory belonging to Schneider looks quite undefended because today it is already confirmed that polyphony never spreads and neither did it spread in the past to monodic regions via cultural influence. On the contrary, polyphony is gradually being lost all over the world as a phenomenon. Thus, Schneider’s theory only has historical value today. Still, it must be noted that some of Schneider’s theses are corroborated today, for example, the folk roots of professional European polyphony, or the conjunction of polyphonic and physical anthropological data.

Ukrainian Scholar of Georgian Music Valentina Steshenko-Kuftina

Before talking about the contributions of foreign scholars to the study of Georgian folk music in the last couple decades (especially after the formation of the International Center for Polyphony Research), it is necessary to mention Ukrainian professional musician, pianist, and musicologist Valentina Steshenko-Kuftina’s book on the pan flute (larchemi, or soinari) (Стешенко-Куфтина, 1936). In this book, the author makes a detailed analysis based on the tuning of surviving pan flutes.

It must be stated that this work has been wholly unjustifiably forgotten in Georgian ethnomusicology. Steshenko-Kuftina was a musician of the highest caliber, a professional pianist, pedagogue, and expert in music theory. She was the first among Georgian ethnomusicologists to begin using the cent system in determining the Georgian modes, which later became an essential rule among 21st-century Georgian and foreign scholars. Unfortunately, Steshenko-Kuftina’s revolutionary work in this aspect is not mentioned by any authors (neither foreigners, nor Georgians), including those working on establishing the Georgian modal system and actively using the cent system. This is understandable from foreign scholars, because they usually have no knowledge of the Russian language, but in regard to Georgian ethnomusicologists working on this subject, such ignorance concerning this is really incomprehensible and needs rectification. Steshenko-Kuftina’s work has been relegated quite a large space in Nino Razmadze’s dissertation and article devoted to Georgian instruments, in which the Georgian pan flute – the larchemi/soinari is discussed (Razmadze, 2018), still neither has she mentioned that Steshenko-Kuftina was the first to use the cent system when researching Georgian music.

In my opinion, Steshenko-Kuftina’s work has one general methodological weakness – her belief that the beginnings of vocal music took shape in instrumental music, which can be considered highly questionable.

Apart from Steshenko-Kuftina’s monograph, we can also mention the work of the well-known Russian musicologist Viktor Belyaev devoted to Georgian folk instruments published in 1936 as well (Беляев, 1936). Georgian instruments have been comparatively less studied, and from this standpoint, these works (especially Steshenko-Kuftina’s fundamental book) are truly noteworthy acquisitions for Georgian ethnomusicologists.

Foreign Scholars Regarding Georgian Folk Music During the Soviet Union

Foreign scholars' contacts with Georgia and Georgian musicologists were naturally, greatly restricted by Georgia's presence within the Soviet Union.

For example, the reason for my professor Mr. Grigol Chkhikvadze's constant gripes was neglectfully abandoned Lazeti, a big portion of which was on Turkish territory, and is so even today. But if it is easy to go to Laz villages today, it was not even feasible to dream of doing so within the conditions of the Soviet Union. This is why Mr. Grigol personally requested that Peter Gold, an American student interested in Georgian music, go down to Georgian villages located in Turkey and record songs from them. In 1968, Peter actually traveled to Turkey and recorded some songs from Georgians, a portion of which was released in 1968 under the University of Indiana Archive label. I remember news of the release of the songs recorded by Peter Gold in Lazeti on vinyl in 1973 spreading like wildfire (the recordings were released a second time in 2018. See: Tsurtsumia, Acat, Ziegler, 2018). This fervor would be probably difficult to comprehend in modern Georgia, because travel to Turkey by Georgians is easily accessible, but when the borders of the Soviet Union were shut down, Turkey was completely unreachable for Georgian ethnomusicologists.

Apart from this, there were still some small flashes of light during the Soviet period when foreign musicians went to Georgian villages to hear folk singing. Such were the visits, for example, of Alan Lomax, Erich Stockmann, and conductor Anton Shalinsky to Georgia. All three attended the ethnologic congress held in Moscow in 1964 (the Khrushchev Thaw), where Grigol Chkhikvadze and Vladimer Akhobadze gave some speeches. Lomax, Stockmann, and Shalinsky met the Georgian colleagues and used this opportunity to at least go for a little while to the legendary country of polyphony – Georgia. Lomax first recorded some Russian, Azeri, and Georgian songs himself while still in Moscow, and apart from this, copied the traditional music works of numerous other people part of Russia from the archive. After the congress, however, he came to Tbilisi for a while in August, and with assistance from Grigol Chkhikvadze and Vladimer Akhobadze at Tbilisi State Conservatoire, copied some material from the Georgian folk-art archive. At this time, Lomax was amassing material for his own widely known *Cantometrics* project (Lomax, 1967). In Chkhikvadze's words, he took the guests to Kakheti (Akira and Shilda) to record some songs from villagers directly from several communities in Svaneti (Chkhikvadze, 1980: 20).

By the way, the first attempt at a comparative study of Georgian polyphony belongs to Stockmann (a short, 3-page article with one Albanian and one Georgian example), in which he compared the Georgian and Albanian polyphonic traditions with each other (1956). American Noah Greenberg (who also attended the historical 1964 congress), took some recordings along with him and gave them to Igor Stravinsky (more on this later). During approximately the same period, Paul Collaer did a comparison between Georgian, Spanish, Hungarian, and Bulgarian songs (1954, 1955). By the way, in an article published a little later where he justifiably declares European folk polyphony to be a precursor to professional European polyphony, Collaer mistakenly named the Armenian "Shalakho" performed on zurnas as an example of vocal polyphony, causing misunderstandings among European scholars (1960). Collaer had never been to the Caucasus.

The visit by Lomax, Stockmann, and Shalinsky took place more to make some general impressions and not for carrying out a serious study. Mr. Grigol told me that when meeting with some peasants,

Stockmann asked him through an interpreter, “How can we know that these are genuine village peasants and not just some professional singers in disguise?” In response, Mr. Grigol asked the singers, “Come, show your hands to the guests, they don’t believe that you are villagers”. The singers fulfilled this request for Mr. Grigol, approached the guests, and humbly showed their hands to the foreign guests. After the guests saw their hands and nails blackened from working in the soil with their own eyes (which cannot be washed away whatsoever), they realized they were dealing with genuine folk singers.

By the way, I had also successfully used this convincing proof employed by Mr. Grigol in 1964, when I took some Finns with me on an expedition to the Sagarejo district in 1979. In particular, a Finnish husband and wife followed along with me at the request of Seppo Heikinheimo, an extremely famous and authoritative Finnish musicologist, who I had met by chance at his brother’s wedding in Tbilisi. Mr. Seppo related to me that he had received a record of Georgian folk songs from Liana Isakadze as a gift. “Tell Isakadze thanks for the record, but I haven’t listened to it”, Seppo frankly told me, “I generally respect it, but I don’t listen to folk singing that much... Well now, when my brother decided to marry a Georgian girl, I picked up Isakadze’s present and listened to it for the first time, and now I have one question for you as a professional ethnomusicologist”. I well realized what the Finnish musicologist was intending to ask about. Truly, he asked me precisely what I expected. “As I figured out, there are complex, arranged variants of folk songs recorded on those records, because it’s really impossible for folk singing to be so complex, am I right?” I replied to Seppo that despite the Rustavi Ensemble performing Georgian folk songs in a highly academic fashion (he had this ensemble’s record), the songs, in fact, are not altered by them, and that even today he can hear the same songs sung by peasants in the villages.

Seppo was astonished, in disbelief. Then he asked me, “How can this be verified?” Seppo had come for his own brother’s wedding, I was a friend of the bride Nazi Jokhadze, herself an exceptional singer, and since the wedding was taking place in 1979 during the hot days of a tragic summer for my family, and also that it was a few days before the start of the expedition to Kakheti, I offered Seppo to come along with me to Sagarejo (this was my first independent expedition as the result of my father’s illness), where he himself would have been able to listen to the singing of genuine Kakhetian peasants. Despite the great interest, Seppo unfortunately did not have this much time, but he asked his third brother Hanu and sister-in-law Katarina to come along with me and listen, record, and see the village singers themselves.

Quite so, Hanu and Katarina tagged along, I showed them the singers’ hands (I recalled Mr. Grigol’s argument in any case to avoid any doubts), and to not draw things out, both Hanu and Katarina wiped away tears upon hearing the very first song (I remember it well, this was “Satskali glekhis shvili var” (I’m a Wretched Peasant Child)). After Hanu and Katarina’s return to Finland, I was commissioned by Seppo to write an article about Georgian folk singing, its unique polyphony. This article was even published in the Finnish journal *Music* in 1980. Today, Georgian ethnomusicologists freely travel to various countries and publish articles in foreign journals, but in 1980, during the harsh Soviet Union regime, the publication of an article in a foreign journal was really big news. This was my first foreign publication, in fact, commissioned due to the astonishingly high artistic level of Georgian singing and not because of my professional training at that time (in 1979 I was still a first-year postgraduate student).

I have told this story to the reader in order to show the typical path traversed by foreign ethnomusi-

collegists, those who are actively involved today in studying Georgian folk music. They usually begin working on Georgian folk or professional music really because of the indelible impression made upon them by the music itself. Dimitri Arakishvili's life itself was defined by listening to Lado Aghniashvili's choir in 1890 in Armavir, the North Caucasus (where Arakishvili was born). What else can I say, I myself was filled with some wonderful impressions after listening to Georgian chants performed for the first time on TV by Gordela, which became a decisive factor in my career choice. I graduated from school with the decision of becoming a biologist, zoologist, or geneticist, so many things were personally changed in my life through hearing Georgian chants for the first time.

In the same period, before "perestroika", more precisely, in 1983, contact was established with Japan. In particular, I was introduced to the Japanese musicologist Minoru Morita by Izaly Zemtsovsky, the greatest friend of Georgian music. Morita had an astonishing fascination with going to the villages, but he no longer had any hope of ever receiving permission from the Soviet authorities (specifically from the KGB). He told me that despite numerous attempts, his request for going to any Russian village was denied. (Morita was a Russian music specialist, that's why he knew Zemtsovsky well and was interested in going to a Russian village). It is intriguing that when we made a similar request in Georgia, a positive response was received right away. As I realize, it was more acceptable to the Soviet ideologists that a foreigner go to a Georgian village where they would have more positive memories remaining from the trip, than from a Russian village. Morita released his own recordings from Guria and Kakheti on vinyl record (the record was re-released on CD, as well, see. Morita, 1997). It is really through Minoru Morita that I found out in Georgia about the existence of the Japanese Yamashirogumi Ensemble and their performance of "Khasanbegura", which provided Anzor Erkomaishvili the means of establishing a fruitful and long-term collaboration with Japan.

The name of the French musician Yvette Grimaud occupies an important place among foreigners working on Georgian folk music. A professional pianist projected to have a brilliant future, Yvette Grimaud became intrigued in Georgian music that was distant to her, and after a years-long struggle with the Soviet Union KGB and other state organizations, she fulfilled her dream of going to Georgia and recording more than 300 songs in various regions. She managed to do this through Grigol Chkhikvadze's help in 1967. Many articles about Georgian music and its possible connections to the centers of ancient civilization were published by Yvette Grimaud in the 70s and 80s (Grimaud, 1969, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981). The presentation of Yvette Grimaud's book *Grimaud and Georgian Music* took place in Tbilisi, in July 2019.

Here it is necessary to recall some international conferences dealing with polyphonic topics of interest to us and their relation to the Georgian subject matter. First of all, I want to mention that the International Union of Folk Music's 18th international conference was held in Accra, Ghana, Africa, in 1966. This conference is of intrigue to us in that out of the two selected themes there, one was devoted to polyphony. Only one paper was dedicated to Georgian polyphony at this conference. This was Swedish ethnomusicologist Ernst Emsheimer's review paper "Georgian Folk Polyphony". The conference material was published in 1967. Emsheimer had been interested in polyphony earlier (Emsheimer, 1964) and had had some exposure to Georgian polyphony even earlier (Emsheimer, 1951). By the way, Simha Arom also participated in the Accra conference, who at that time, was only studying the polyphony of Central Africa, and is today one

of the most active researchers of Georgian polyphony. Even earlier in the 1930s, Ernst Emsheimer was involved in quite a fascinating project when together with Eugene Gippius, Zinaida Evald, and Joseph Megrelidze, he recorded (using a few recording devices) and deciphered several complex Gurian songs in 1935. Later, the German ethnomusicologist Susanne Ziegler, with help from Edisher Garakanidze, recorded the same songs in Guria and made some interesting deductions regarding the songs' historical dynamics (Ziegler, 2023). You can also see her article published in Georgian in 1989.

It might also be intriguing to point out to the reader that the first conference (or more precisely, a seminar) devoted entirely to polyphony was held for the first time in the history of ethnomusicology in 1972. Interestingly, the conference organizer was Eduard Alekseev, the chair of the Soviet Union Folklore Commission and an ethnomusicologist from Yakutia, with participation from the Georgian Composers Union and the Choreographic Society. The conference/seminar, in today's sense, was an international one (all republics part of the Soviet Union participated in it, including those where vocal polyphony has not been attested). It is significant that this 2-week conference was held in Georgia, it also "moved", going from one region to another (in particular, the conference opened in Batumi and concluded in Tbilisi). This is something symbolic, in that the first special conference devoted to folk polyphony was held right in Georgia. Only Georgian experts spoke about Georgian polyphony at the conference (Grigol Chkhikvadze, Mindia, Kakhi Rosebashvili, Kukuri Chokhonelidze, and Valerian Maghradze). In general, I want to remind my colleagues that in contrast to Western ethnomusicology where a trend was (and still is) widely instilled of European and American ethnomusicologists working with the musical traditions of other countries, in the Soviet Union it was not acceptable for ethnomusicologists to work with any cultures they had no connection to. Conference attendees listened to (and recorded) 32 ensembles. Unfortunately, the conference material was not published. Apart from this, a conference "Drone Polyphony in the Traditional Music of European Peoples" was held in Sankt Pölten, Austria, in 1973. The conference material was published (Deutsch, 1981), but no one had specifically spoken about Georgian polyphony there.

It is interesting that ethnomusicologists of Russia and other countries were revitalized through polyphony conferences in Tbilisi and Borjomi in the 1980s. In 1989, a special conference devoted to the polyphony of Russian peoples was held in Voronezh (see Engovatova, 1989). Several other conferences were also held (see, for example, Wu, 2002, regarding material from a conference held in Taiwan; also see Oamaa & Partlas, 2008, concerning material from a conference in Estonia in 2004; or see Ahmedaja & Haid, 2008, about material from a conference held in Austria in 2005). Generally starting in the 1980s, a trend gradually emerged of Georgia becoming an international center for the study of polyphony. This trend finally prevailed after the conduction of the first international symposium of polyphony in Georgia (2002) and the founding of Tbilisi Conservatoire International Research Center for Polyphony (2003).

Foreign Researchers of Georgian Folk Music in the Post-Soviet Period

Without a doubt, a completely new stage of foreign ethnomusicologists becoming intrigued with Georgian polyphony began following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and especially after the founding of the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony in Tbilisi in 2003. This took place in

wake of Georgian polyphony being declared a monument of world immaterial heritage (2001). In 2002, a tradition began of holding international symposiums, which continues successfully to this day. It is right after these symposiums becoming a mainstay that the number of foreigners working on Georgian polyphony dramatically expanded.

Of course, this fact had some objective reasons. The first one was the destruction of the Soviet Union, making it possible to establish direct contacts with foreign colleagues, which earlier, had been impossible; the second was the introduction of the Internet and digital communication systems, greatly facilitating inter-scholar communication; the third was an explosion in the interest towards Georgian religious music forbidden for decades; the fourth reason was the introduction of grant systems, in which priority was frequently given to collaborations between Georgian and foreign colleagues.

It also certainly needs saying that the fruitful work of the polyphony center opened in Tbilisi in 2003 and the tradition of holding international symposiums in Tbilisi were facilitated, and even more, further reinforced in the 1980s by the conferences devoted to polyphony held during the Soviet years. In the years 1984, 1986, and 1988, their dimensions gradually increased, to boot. Representatives from many Soviet Union republics participated in the Tbilisi conference held in 1984 (or from a modern understanding, this was also an international conference); at the symposium held in Borjomi in 1986, there were already guests participating from so-called socialist countries (Nikolai Kaufman from Bulgaria and Oskar Elschek from Slovakia), whereas in 1988, there were already attendees from Western, non-socialist countries at the conference held in Borjomi (Barbara Krader and Margarita Mazo from America, Susanne Ziegler from West Germany, and Franz Födermayr from Austria, as well as Dragoslav Dević from the then “semi-capitalist” Yugoslavia). Among foreign scholars working on Georgian music today, Susanne Ziegler was the one who developed an interest in Georgian music earlier than others. The following conference planned for Borjomi in 1991 no longer took place due to changes in the political situation, although today I have saved a letter of Dieter Christensen’s consent and Thor Heyerdahl’s response). It is necessary to recall Sylvia Bolle-Zemp, who managed to conduct an expedition in a grim, dark country full of banditry in the 1990s and publish the material. The first computerized study of Georgian folk singing also belongs to Sylvia Bolle-Zemp (1997, 2001).

During these grim years of the 1990s for Georgia, Simha Arom held two international conferences devoted to polyphony in 1991 and 1994. The conference held in 1991 was primarily dedicated to Russian polyphony (Arom and Meier, 1993), whereas the conference held in 1994 focused on the general problems of polyphony, where Susanne Ziegler’s and Edisher Garakanidze’s papers on Georgian polyphony were presented. Both conferences were held by the French organization *Polifonies Vivante*, which was chaired by Simha Arom and existed for as long as the organization had grant financing. Two international conferences at Tbilisi Conservatory also deserve to be noted (1998, 2000), preparing the foundations for the tradition of holding the great international symposiums in the 21st century.

To fully characterize the works of foreigners interested in Georgian folk music during the post-Soviet period and their contributions to this field, this article would become excessively long. There is probably no necessity for this, because in fact, all the primary works presented at the 11 polyphony symposiums are easily accessible to readers. I offer interested readers to visit the Research Center for Traditional Polyphony website (www.polyphony.ge), where all the papers read at the symposiums are presented in

full in Georgian and English. It is wholly impossible to discuss each of them, therefore I will attempt to present them according to their field and mention the foreign scholars who have made tremendous contributions to the study of Georgian music.

First of all, I want to especially point out the immense labors of the Russian-American ethnomusicologist Izaly Zemtsovsky in the endeavor of studying Georgian music. Apart from Georgian music frequently being the focus in Zemtsovsky's works (see, for example, Zemtsovsky, 2002, 2010), over the years he has helped Georgian colleagues in their work, beginning with the conferences devoted to polyphony held in Borjomi and ending with preparing and holding the 21st-century symposiums.

Out of the foreigners interested in Georgian music, I have already singled out the years-long fervent work of Susanne Ziegler from Germany. The devotion of the distinguished Austrian scholar Franz Födermayr is worthy of note, who, beginning in the 1980s, was a great supporter of our center. I especially want to note the loyalty to Georgian subject matter of Italian Renato Morelli, an ethnographic film master, and Swiss Hugo Zemp, and the several ethnographic films shot by them together with Georgian colleagues. I also want to recall the German-American Ethnomusicologist Dieter Christensen, who had never worked on Georgian topics, but made a great contribution in Georgian polyphony being recognized as a world treasure by UNESCO in 2001, thereby producing many positive changes in Georgia and beyond.

Distinguished among symposium participants for his own activity is French ethnomusicologist Simha Arom, one of the greatest authorities on polyphony in the modern world who has gotten involved in the various aspects of researching traditional Georgian music with wonderful enthusiasm, frequently in tandem with various Georgian and foreign scholars and students (see, for example, Arom and et al., 2018). Here I must also recall a large group of Japanese scholars (Emi Nishina, Manabu Honda, Tadao Maekawa, Satoshi Nakamura, Masako Morimoto, Reiko Yagi, Norie Kawai, Yoshiharu Yonekura, Hiroshi Shibasaki, Onodera Eiko), who are more or less connected to the name of Japanese scholar and public figure Tsutomu Ōhashi (aka Shoji Yamashiro) and who study the internal nature of the traditional Georgian musical language with enviable devotion. Here it is possible to recall Japanese ethnomusicologist Kai Hisaoka, who conducted some field expeditions and set forth some novel ideas. I want to point out Thomas Hoyzerman from Switzerland, Joan Mills, Richard Gauss, and Michael Bloom from England for generously assisting Georgian ensembles in the popularization of Georgian folk music. Many workshops for Georgian folk singing have been held over the years through their help, collections of Georgian folk songs have been published (see, for example, Garakanidze & Mills, 2004). There are also singers among Georgian music scholars, who began Georgian folk singing by performing it and then becoming interested in various aspects of research: Stuart Gelzer, Carl Linich, Frank Kane, Marina Kaganova (now Decristoforo), Johan Westman, Rebecca Stuart, Clayton Parr, Lauren Stephan, Matthew Arndt, Lauren Ninoshvili, Zoe Perret, Patty Cuyler.

Notable among ethnomusicologists intrigued by Georgian folk music after the 2000s are Polo Vallejo of Spain, Andrea Kuzmich and Matthew Knight of Canada, Brian Fairley of America and especially Frank Scherbaum, and the research group associated with him (including Meinard Müller and Sebastian Rosenzweig), who are actively working in the sphere of mathematically modeling various aspects of the musical language of Georgian singing, frequently with Georgian colleagues (see, for example, Sherbaum et al., 2016).

An additional sphere are issues related to Georgian chant, distinguished in this area is French scholar Jean-Baptiste Thibault, who became interested in Mikael Modrekili's *Iadgari* and was the first to note the non-typical placement of musical symbols on both sides of the verbal text (Thibaut, 1914). The works of John Graham, an American scholar should be mentioned (you can see them in the symposium material). I can also recall the extremely large sphere of foreign singers and performers interested in Georgian folk singing, and the countless ensembles and choirs created by them in various countries of the world, but I will not speak of them, because a review of this immense sphere is the special reason for Caroline Bithell's article in this collection, who is an English scholar and yet one more devoted researcher of Georgian folk singing.

Georgian folk music can be said to enjoy the tremendous interest and love of foreign scholars. In my article, I tried to highlight a large portion of foreign scholars, especially comparatively rarer (and sometimes forgotten) representatives of researchers from earlier periods and discuss them with Georgian readers. A realistic list of foreign scholars, travelers, historians, singers, and composers might contain many other names not mentioned by me in the article, although I attempted to make this list as exhaustive as possible (see also Nakashidze, 2011). I do not know how complete my aforementioned list is, but one thing is clear: unique Georgian folk singing has acquired many zealous supporters. This process continues to this day and is becoming more intensive, and we can be confident of it continuing in the future as well. Today it is already evident that the more time passes, the greater foreign scholars' interest will be, and therefore, their contributions will increase in all aspects of studying unique Georgian folk singing and popularizing at an international scale.

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**GEORGIAN VOICES GO GLOBAL: FOREIGN PERFORMERS
OF GEORGIAN POLYPHONY AND GEORGIAN TRADITIONAL
MUSIC ON THE WORLD MUSIC STAGE**

In this article I explore two phenomena relating to the internationalisation of Georgia's polyphonic singing traditions in recent times: (1) the presentation of Georgian polyphony as a form of world music, associated primarily with international festivals and concert tours and further disseminated via CDs, YouTube videos, and other forms of digital media; and (2) the appearance of an ever-growing number of Georgian choirs and ensembles made up of non-Georgians in many countries outside Georgia. At a theoretical level, my discussion resonates with contemporary themes in ethnomusicology, including the aesthetics and discourses of world music, intercultural performance, and the politics of heritage in a global age.¹

Georgian polyphony as world music

Two landmark moments secured a prestigious place for Georgian polyphony at the high table of the world's cultural treasures. In 1977, the song "Chakrulo" (performed by the State Ensemble of Folk Song and Dance) was one of twenty-seven musical examples included on the Golden Record that was sent into space on the Voyager spacecraft, designed as a message about life on Earth for any extra-terrestrial beings to which it might find its way.² In 2001, Georgian Polyphonic Singing was one of the nineteen "cultural spaces or forms of cultural expression which reflect the creativity and diversity of the human spirit" that were included in UNESCO's first Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO 2001: 3). These two honours rest on expert validation of the distinctiveness and value of Georgia's rich polyphonic song heritage and pay homage to the spectacular performances of its highly skilled singers. It is therefore not surprising that mention of these distinguished achievements should serve as a prelude to any discussion or presentation of Georgian traditional music today.

Georgian polyphony has had enthusiastic advocates in the world music industry as well. In the Anglophone world, these include Simon Broughton, UK-based editor-in-chief of *Songlines* magazine and co-editor of *World Music: The Rough Guide*. Informed by his own travels in Georgia, Broughton wrote the entry on Georgia for *The Rough Guide* (Broughton 1999) and has penned a series of short features about Georgian ensembles and CD releases for *Songlines*. Lucy Duran's *World Routes* series for BBC Radio 4 includes two hour-long audio documentaries about Georgian music. First aired in December

¹ I gratefully acknowledge the support of the British Academy and Leverhulme Trust for the research that has informed this article.

² Timothy Ferris, member of the Voyager Interstellar Record Committee, recalls how "Alan Lomax pulled a Russian recording, said to be the sole copy of "Chakrulo" in North America, from a stack of lacquer demos and sailed it across the room to me like a Frisbee" (Ferris 2017: 7–8).

2007, the programmes follow Duran as she travels around the country meeting musicians, encountering different kinds of music in its natural setting, and learning about other aspects of Georgian culture and history along the way.³ More recently, one of the programmes in the four-part series *The Song Hunters*, presented by British folk singer Sam Lee and first aired in 2019, documented Lee's meetings with traditional singers in and around Tbilisi under the tantalising title "Suppression and Survival".

WOMAD, the iconic world music festival founded by Peter Gabriel in 1980, has also featured performances of Georgian polyphony. Now with offshoots in different parts of the world, the main festival continues to be staged annually in the UK. Among the Georgian ensembles that have appeared over the years is the Gurian ensemble Iadoni, whose appearance in 2013 (their first ever trip outside their homeland) was made possible with the support of Georgia's Art Gene team. In addition to performing on stage, Iadoni also took part in the cooking demonstrations programmed for the Taste the World tent. While some of the singers serenaded the audience in this more intimate setting, other members of the ensemble prepared a traditional Georgian dish which listeners were then invited to sample, together with a glass of Georgian wine. In this way, audience members – not unlike the audience for Lucy Duran's *World Routes* programmes – gained a more holistic understanding of the cultural and social context to which the songs belong. The device of bringing together the music of guest performers with their national or ethnic cuisine was, of course, supremely well suited to Georgia, where singing and feasting are symbiotically entwined in the traditional setting of the supra.

All-encompassing world music festivals such as WOMAD have served as an important platform for introducing Georgian singers to large, multi-generational audiences of festivalgoers with eclectic musical tastes. Their openness to radically different musical styles and genres notwithstanding, listeners are often stunned by their unexpected encounter with a sound that is dramatically different from anything they might have imagined, prompting them to explore further. At the same time, the exponential growth and diversification of festival culture has provided more focused opportunities for musicians to perform for different kinds of audiences. Listings in the biannual *Bulletin* produced by the International Research Centre for Traditional Polyphony testify to the range of themed festivals in which Georgian polyphony has found a niche, while also giving some indication of the geographical reach of the musical travels of Georgian ensembles. Examples from recent years include: Basiani's concerts at the Perugia Musica Classica Festival (Italy), the Sacrées Journées de Strasbourg (France), the Festival of Church Music on the Valaam Archipelago in the Republic of Karelia (Russian Federation), and the Days of World Music in Beijing (China); Didgori's involvement in the Riga Acapella Festival (Latvia), the Festival Arrée Voce in Brittany (France), the Strings of Autumn International Music Festival in Prague (Czech Republic), and the Sharq Taronalar (Melodies of the East) International Music Festival in Samarkand (Uzbekistan); Shavnabada's participation in the International Cervantino Festival in Guanajuato (Mexico); Anchiskhati's inclusion in the Christian Culture Festival in Lodz (Poland); Sakhioba's participation in Song of Our

³ The description provided for the first episode recounts how, at an outdoor dinner party in the region of Kakheti, "Lucy listens to the magical polyphonic cappella singing of the eight singers of Tsinandali performing traditional Georgian songs, while enjoying exquisite traditional food and wine. She also admires the beautiful scenery of the valley and the Caucasian mountains, the highest in Europe".

Roots (Early Music Festival) in Jaroslaw (Poland); Gorda's concert as part of the Orthodox Christmas in the Lithuania International Arts Festival in Vilnius (Lithuania); Amer-Imeri's participation in the International Festival of the Children of Mountains (Święto Dzieci Gór) in Nowy Sącz (Poland); and Rustavi's appearances at Cardiff's Festival of the Voice (Wales), the Festival of Caucasian Culture in Korea, and as honoured guest at the International Festival Masterpieces of UNESCO in Olonkho Land (Republic of Sakha). Many ensembles also undertake their own extended concert tours to particular countries, as well as respond to direct invitations to present concerts for special occasions, and this may take them even further afield – for example, to India or parts of Africa, as well as the United States and Canada.

As a professional ensemble with a 55-year history (stretching back to 1968), Rustavi – now the Georgian State Academic Ensemble of Folk Song and Dance – continues to tour more frequently and widely than any other ensemble. Before the development of the infrastructures and technologies that now support the widespread circulation of world music, Rustavi paved the way by taking Georgian traditional music and dance to audiences in many different parts of the world. In the foreword to *Georgia: The Land of Unique People and Songs* (Erkomaishvili 2021), we are told that Rustavi has held up to 6,000 concerts in 80 countries and released recordings of more than 900 songs. The large-format book that forms part of the collection *400 Georgian Folk Songs: Ensemble Rustavi*, produced to commemorate Rustavi's 50th anniversary, is packed with press reviews from the ensemble's global odyssey. The authors of these reviews invariably describe Rustavi's rapturous reception by audiences won over by their "high-spirited", "breath-taking", "athletic", "intricate", "refined", "polished", "exquisite" and "ethereal" singing and awed by the sophistication and complexity of the music.

Georgian polyphony is, of course, only one among hundreds of the world's musical traditions to have benefitted from the performance opportunities and access to new audiences offered by international festivals and concert tours. Of further interest are the collaborative projects that have brought Georgian polyphony into direct dialogue with artists representing other art forms, at the same time introducing Georgia's musical heritage to a very different audience demographic. Perhaps the most intriguing example is *Songs of the Wanderers* by the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, with Lin Hwai-Min's choreography depicting a Buddhist monk's quest for enlightenment (inspired in part by Herman Hesse's novel *Siddhartha*) set to a soundtrack of Georgian folk songs performed by the Rustavi Ensemble. Since its creation in 1994, the show has, for the most part, featured recorded music but Rustavi has also appeared live at special performances in Germany, Austria, Malaysia, and Taiwan.⁴ While the popular notion of music as a universal language has largely been rejected by the academic community, projects such as this highlight the potential of music to speak across borders – geographical, cultural and linguistic – and to find new meanings and emotional resonances beyond any literal meaning conveyed by the lyrics or any ritual or symbolic association determined by the song's customary usage in its culture of origin. These reflections in turn unlock new layers of theoretical interpretation that might accrue to the concept of "world music".

Towards the end of the Soviet period – coinciding with the arrival of "world music" as a specific category within the music industry – the voices of the Rustavi Ensemble had also reached the CD-buying

⁴ For a review of a performance at Sadler's Well, London in 2016 (at which I was also present), see <https://dancetabs.com/2016/05/cloud-gate-dance-theatre-of-taiwan-songs-of-the-wanderers-london/>

public in the West through its first international album, *Georgian Voices*, released by Elektra Nonesuch in 1989. Featuring a range of song genres and regional styles selected by Anzor Erkomaishvili and Ted Levin from studio recordings made by Melodiya in 1981 and 1988 (originally released as *100 Georgian Folk Songs*), the album endures as a concise introduction to “classics” of the Georgian songbook, some of which have since become staples in the repertoires of foreign Georgian choirs: “Tsmindao Ghmerto”, “Tshkenosuri”, “Mival Guriashi”, “Ali-Pasha”, “Orovela”, “Lazhgvash”, “Odoya”, “Hasanbegura”, “Mirangula”, “Chakrulo”, “Sabodisho”, “Lechkhmuri Makruli”, “Kebadi” and “Guruli Naduri”. This landmark release was followed by *Table Songs of Georgia* featuring the Tsinandali Choir, originally recorded by Melodiya in 1988 and released in 1993 on the Realworld label (WOMAD Music Ltd.).⁵ Meanwhile, in a story almost as unlikely as that of the alliance of traditional Georgian polyphony with contemporary Taiwanese dance and ancient Buddhist rites, some of the early converts to Georgian polyphony first discovered it not through world music or folk music channels but via the intermediary of Kate Bush’s chart-topping album *Hounds of Love* (1985). The song “Hello Earth” features as part of its chorus section a mesmerising, if approximate version of the Georgian song “Tsintsarko”, performed by the Richard Hickox Singers. The song had caught Bush’s attention via yet another intermediary, Werner Herzog’s film *Nosferatu The Vampyre* (1979), whose soundtrack included a recording of the song by Georgian ensemble Gordela.⁶ Whether we view this case through a “celebratory” or an “anxious” lens (to borrow Steven Feld’s terms for opposing narratives of world music: see Feld 2000), the fact remains that the Georgian reference in both Bush’s song and Herzog’s film has led many listeners back to the original source.

In the 21st century, the number of ensembles specialising in Georgian polyphony has snowballed, yet CDs have remained notoriously difficult to obtain outside Georgia. This situation has now been rectified at least in part by the shift to digital media. Websites such as Alazani.ge have served as a gateway for overseas listeners eager to discover more and the State Folklore Centre now provides online access to dozens of CDs via its page on the Audiomack platform, as well as its own website.⁷ Many ensembles have built up dedicated followings through their own websites, Facebook pages, YouTube channels, and Spotify accounts, and some now use platforms such as Bandcamp for the sale of digital downloads.⁸

At the same time, the Internet – with its almost unlimited capacity, unfettered access, and freedom of choice – has made unexpected stars of many different kinds of artists. In 2014, three teenage girls who subsequently adopted the name Trio Mandili became an overnight sensation with a selfie video (shot on a mobile phone) which showed them walking down an unpaved country road singing “Apareka”, a folk-flavoured popular song typical of Georgia’s eastern highland region of Khevsureti, accompanied by a chromatic panduri (a modified folk instrument).⁹ This style of music falls within a broader category commonly labelled “pseudo-folklore” or “para-folk” by Georgian ethnomusicologists, who typically

⁵ These two albums were among the most prized in my own CD collection at that time.

⁶ See further <https://www.katebushencyclopedia.com/hello-earth>

⁷ See <https://audiomack.com/folkcentre> and <http://folk.gov.ge/category/audio/>

⁸ See, for example, <https://ialoni.bandcamp.com> and <https://zedashe.bandcamp.com>

⁹ At the time of writing (November 2022), the original video has had more than 7.7 million views. Trio Mandili has a well-maintained YouTube channel that is regularly updated with new uploads and has 1.28 million subscribers.

view it as low-brow and kitschy, comparing it unfavourably with “authentic” folklore. More recently, the less loaded terms “panduri pop” and “pop-folk” have been proposed respectively by Matthew Knight (2019a: 133) and Teona Lomsadze (2022: 394).¹⁰ Certainly, the songs in Trio Mandili’s somewhat limited, easy-listening repertoire are worlds away from the complex, deep-rooted polyphonic songs of Kakheti, Guria, or Svaneti, for example, yet they, too, have served as a point of entry for new listeners – especially members of the younger generation – who have gone on to explore Georgia’s more diverse and conventionally representative musical heritage in greater depth.¹¹

Theorising the appeal of Georgian polyphony for international audiences

Within the overarching meta-genre of world music, Georgian polyphony clearly exists in a rather different category from the many styles of traditional and popular music from the African and South American continents that have found a home on the dance floor as well as on the concert stage.¹² Yet it continues to cast its spell over multitudes of listeners and has acquired a dedicated following among connoisseurs of unaccompanied vocal music, often alongside the polyphony of Corsica, Sardinia, and Bulgaria.¹³

It is illuminating to reflect on the attraction of Georgian polyphony as world music through the lens of Thomas Turino’s discussion of the appeal of “worldbeat”, with reference to the music of Zimbabwean artist Thomas Mapfumo. Turino analyses Mapfumo’s success with mainly white, liberal, cosmopolitan audiences in relation to what he terms “the sociological side of the Bob Marley legacy” (Turino 2000: 338). The term “sociological side” is borrowed from Chris Blackwell, founder of Island Records, and refers to “the ideological themes and images that become part of the style as expressed through musical sound, lyrics, public stance, dress, and spoken discourse”. Within this frame of reference, Turino identifies “three important streams”: first, liberatory politics; second, “exotic” spiritualism; and third, “a distinctive ‘roots,’ yet familiar, musical style indexing a unique [foreign] locality or community” (ibid.).

To start with the last of these three ingredients as they might be applied to Georgian polyphony, the notion of a musical style that is at once foreign and familiar – and above all unique – maps seamlessly

¹⁰ See Knight (2018) and Lomsadze (2022) for a more detailed discussion of the Trio Mandili phenomenon. Lomsadze recounts a conversation with the artistic director of Estonia’s Seto Folk Festival at which the trio was invited to perform in 2017: “As the artistic director of the festival told me, the trio of young, funny girls singing Georgian polyphonic songs was already familiar to Estonians and was a bigger attraction than the skilled male Georgian choirs with their serious faces and formal performances on stage. [...] they break with the stereotype that Georgian traditional music is only performed by a group of men, who stand on stage dressed in traditional chokhas, eyebrows raised, dour-faced, and not moving except when the song calls for clapping” (Lomsadze 2022: 395–396). Trio Mandili, then, represents something fresh and different, with the girls’ image being just as important as the music itself.

¹¹ It is worth noting that I have met foreign visitors engaged in the intensive study of Georgian polyphonic singing on study tours in Georgia whose love affair with Georgian music was first sparked by the discovery of Trio Mandili’s YouTube videos.

¹² For an overview of the history, uses, and discourses of “world music”, see Bithell 2018.

¹³ A stylised form of Bulgarian polyphony – the arranged folklore characteristic of the Communist period, as performed by the Bulgarian State Radio and Television Choir, the Filip Koutev Choir and others – has been a staple of the world music scene since the outset. When an album first released by Marcel Cellier in 1975 was rereleased on the 4AD label in 1986 under the title *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares*, it became an immediate sensation. *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares Volume 2*, released in 1988, was recognised by a Grammy Award for the Best Traditional Folk Recording. The so-called “Bulgarian Voices” were among the original artists prompting the infamous series of meetings (in London) of music industry executives – including managers of independent record labels, concert promoters and broadcasters – that led to the introduction of “world music” as a marketing category and a new classification to be used in record stores.

onto the way in which many listeners characterise how they hear Georgian music. Simon Broughton, for example, in his “Beginner’s Guide” to the Rustavi Choir for *Songlines* magazine, says of the performance of “Chakrulo” included on the Voyager Golden Record: “It’s a fantastic piece of vocal polyphony [...], full of slow-moving drones and harmonies with clashing discords, like colliding tectonic plates. [...] Georgia is positioned where Europe and Asia meet, and while the music sounds European in its rich polyphony, it also sounds decidedly alien in its angular melodies and strident discords”. Broughton explicitly conjures up images of the primeval and exotic, in this case making a connection with Georgia’s unique alphabet as well as its dramatic landscapes: “This music sounds natural, elemental, and other-worldly, like Georgia’s amazing mountain landscapes – higher than the Alps, or their exotic, cursive script – unintelligibly fascinating to those of us who can’t read it” (Broughton, 2016: 78).

The notion of exotic spiritualism resonates at several levels. In the case of *Songs of the Wanderers*, part of Rustavi’s appeal was the perceived spiritual nature of their sound. Lin Hwai-Min recalls his first reaction upon listening to the cassette tape he had been given by a friend: “The songs might have been about farming and feasting, but all carried a strong sense of religious comfort, pacifying yet uplifting at the same time” (Lin 2015, in Ensemble Rustavi 2018: 59). Today, the repertoire of many Georgian ensembles includes polyphonic liturgical chants from the Georgian Orthodox tradition that stretches back centuries. These chants have a mystique of their own, not only in terms of their harmonic resonance and unusual progressions, modulations, and resolutions, but also on account of their recent resurrection following decades of suppression and attempted elimination by the Soviet regime. The remote mountainous region of Svaneti, meanwhile, has preserved a living tradition of pre-Christian hymns and ritual songs accompanied by round dances, some of which are thought to relate to ancient cults associated with fertility or the sun. Pre-Christian or autochthonous belief systems have also left their trace in songs from the women’s repertoire, including healing songs and ritual songs for influencing the weather. These associations are a compelling part of the appeal for Western listeners (and singers) in search of an organic kind of spirituality outside the realm of institutionalised religion.

Finally, the notion of liberatory politics again offers rich interpretative possibilities. The title of Sam Lee’s radio feature, “Suppression and Survival”, points to the resilience of traditional music practices during the Soviet era. Alongside stories of the literal resurrection of priceless chant manuscripts that had been buried in the ground for safekeeping, the biographical notes of contemporary ensembles typically refer to the task of reviving and reclaiming half-forgotten repertoires and local song variants which many singers have embraced with a missionary-like zeal. Traditional music played a crucial role in the years leading up to Georgian independence in 1991, with songs like “Shavlego” becoming overt symbols of the struggle for freedom. The association of traditional music performance with heroic resistance remains all too pertinent in light of Russia’s ongoing aggressions: The Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008 (the Russo-Georgian War), Russia’s continued occupation of the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region, and the ongoing war in nearby Ukraine. The association with defending or liberating the homeland is reinforced by the traditional costume worn by the members of most male ensembles: this includes the chokha, a woollen coat with rows of cartridges (now purely decorative) across the chest, and a belt holding a dagger at the waist.

This is not to say that all three of these “streams” play an equal part in the appeal that Georgian polyphony holds for any one individual. Initially, the listener’s response may rest on the sound of the music alone. Their interest may be further piqued by background information and the translation of song lyrics provided in programme notes, features in publications like *Songlines*, and the explanations of the singers themselves in the presentation-style workshops that are now part of the programme at WOMAD and other festivals. For those who pursue their interest still further – ultimately seeking out opportunities to learn Georgian songs themselves or to travel to Georgia to experience the songs in their home environment – the histories and associations behind the songs assume greater significance as they become an ever more palpable presence.

Georgian choirs go global: foreign performers of Georgian polyphony

The rapidly expanding network of “foreign” Georgian choirs and vocal ensembles is one of the most striking trends in the recent history of Georgian polyphonic singing.¹⁴ Most of these choirs are made up entirely of non-Georgians who have discovered Georgian polyphony by chance and found themselves smitten. My own interviewees have spoken in evocative terms of their visceral reaction to first hearing Georgian voices: “It was like a key unlocking something in my chest”; “It was like lightning going down and cutting my body up”; “It was like reaching into my heart and just grabbing me”. The sounds themselves are described as “powerful”, “magical”, “spine-tingling”, “irresistible”. For these individuals and countless others, listening was not enough: they also wanted to experience what it felt like to be part of the sound and they seized on the opportunity to learn to sing Georgian songs as soon as it presented itself. For some, this opportunity came in the form of the intensive workshops led by Edisher Garakanidze, Joseph Jordania, and later Mtiebi at the international Giving Voice Festivals curated by the UK-based Centre for Performance Research (CPR), which attracted delegates from all over the world. In later years, members of the Pilpani family from Svaneti were likewise invited to teach, as well as perform, at international festivals in Poland which were co-curated by Giving Voice and the Grotowski Institute. In the United States, similarly immersive experiences were offered by the association Village Harmony, whose annual programmes have long included study-performance camps in Georgia, now hosted in partnership with the Zedashe Ensemble. As the Georgian singing scene has evolved and diversified, larger numbers have found their way to workshops led by a variety of visiting teachers from Georgia or to Georgian choirs that had already been established in their local area. During the COVID-19 lockdown, several Georgian teachers offered online singing workshops which, with their greater accessibility, drew in another wave of new participants from an even wider demographic.

Countries in which there is an active Georgian singing presence today include the United States, Canada, the UK, Ireland, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Sweden, Finland, Israel, Australia, and Japan. The greatest concentrations of choirs

¹⁴ My discussion of foreign Georgian choirs and ensembles in this part of the article complements my chapter in the volume *Anzor Erkomaishvili and Contemporary Trends in the Performance and Study of Georgian Traditional and Sacred Music* (Bithell 2023). There, I explore some aspects in greater detail, including repertoire choices, teaching resources, and the kind of performance activity typically undertaken by these ensembles in their home countries.

which have a relatively stable membership and hold regular rehearsals and performances are to be found in Western Europe and North America, with several also in Australia. A substantial proportion are dedicated exclusively to Georgian songs; others have broader repertoires featuring a combination of Georgian and Balkan/Eastern European songs, or occasionally Georgian and Corsican songs. Alongside named choirs, there are also looser groupings of Georgian-singing devotees spread over wider geographical areas whose main focal point is provided by weekend workshops led by teachers from Georgia conducting annual workshop tours overseas, often returning to the same places each year. The most avid workshop-goers do not restrict themselves to workshops close to home: there is now a sizeable extended family of Georgian-singing aficionados who are retired or otherwise free to travel and who often attend workshops in other countries as well as their own. This highly specialised community has its complement in the countless community choirs and world music choirs that now include Georgian songs in their repertoire. Also worth noting is the separate field of world music in education and the inclusion of songs from popular and folk genres in the contemporary repertoires of choirs belonging to the more conventional choral world. The series “So You Want to Sing: Guides for Performers and Professionals” – a project of the National Association of Teachers of Singing in the United States – includes volumes devoted to jazz, country, gospel, blues, barbershop, and more. A recent addition to the series is *So You Want to Sing World Music: A Guide for Performers*, which includes a chapter on Georgian polyphony by Matthew Knight (Knight 2019b).

As of November 2022, a total of 37 foreign Georgian choirs and ensembles have performed as part of the biennial symposia organised by the International Research Centre for Traditional Polyphony (IRCTP) at Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Of these, the majority have appeared on stage in Tbilisi, while others contributed to the pre-recorded gala concert streamed during the 2020 symposium, which was held online. Ranked by country, France tops the list of symposium appearances with nine ensembles having featured to date, followed by Canada (seven), Australia (six), the USA (five), and the UK (four). Several of the longest-running foreign Georgian ensembles were present at the first symposium in 2002 that led to the formal establishment of the IRCTP: Gorani and Golden Fleece from Australia, Darbazi from Canada, Irinola from France, Maspindzeli from the UK, and Trio Kavkasia from the USA. Also present on that occasion were the Balkan choir Biti Dobre from the Netherlands and Geinoh-Yamashirogumi from Japan, each of which included Georgian songs as part of its wider repertoire. Some ensembles have appeared multiple times: Gorani has performed at nine out of the eleven symposia held to date, Maspindzeli has performed at six, and Darbazi has appeared five times, as has the Melbourne Georgian Choir. At the 2002 symposium, the academic panels also included a set of papers on the theme “Georgian Polyphonic Song and its Foreign Performers” (Bloom 2003, Gough 2003, Kane 2003, Mills 2003, Zumbadze 2003). The space accorded to these performances and presentations by participants from overseas bears witness to the importance attached to foreign interest in performing, as well as researching Georgian polyphony at the time of the UNESCO proclamation, with its imperative to disseminate Georgian polyphony to international audiences not only as a national treasure but also as an expression of world heritage.

In my ongoing research into this phenomenon, a key point of interest has been the variety of routes, intermediaries, and circumstances by which Georgian songs have been introduced to different countries or singing communities. Equally interesting is the question of what particular interest or need – be it

musical, social, or psychological – Georgian singing may have responded to in specific places and what extra-musical meanings or functions the songs may have assumed. In the paragraphs that follow I present brief extracts from just a few of these histories, with the aim of giving the reader an insight into the diverse lives now lived by Georgian songs in the wider world.

In the UK the first seeds were sown in 1994 when Edisher Garakanidze and Joseph Jordania were invited to teach Georgian songs as part of a week-long conference, entitled “Point of Contact: Performance, Food, and Cookery”, hosted by the Centre for Performance Research in Cardiff (the reader will, by now, appreciate the aptness of this choice). In the years that followed, Edisher returned to lead workshops in various parts of the country, tapping into a national network of community choirs with an appetite for songs from different parts of the world and working with theatre practitioners at the National Theatre Studio in London as well as at the CPR’s Giving Voice Festivals. The London Georgian Choir, now Maspidzeli, was established in 1999 by Helen Chadwick, who had worked closely with Edisher since his first visit. In subsequent years, Georgian choirs appeared in many other parts of Britain and Ireland, including Cambridge (Chela, Buska), Bristol (Borjghali), Ashburton (Borjghali), Leeds (Samzeo), Hebden Bridge (Zarebi), Derby (Derby Georgian Choir), Lancashire (the Lancashire Georgian Singers), Edinburgh (Torola, Skotebi, the Edinburgh Georgian Singers), Findhorn (Alilo, Bukhari), West Wales (Kakali, Papermates), Dublin (Zurmukhti), Wexford (Zuzini), and elsewhere. Members of some of these choirs had worked with Edisher and other Georgian singers such as Nato Zumbadze and Nana Kalandadze who visited the UK in the early days. Others owe their initiation to subsequent waves of singers from Georgia who have led workshops in the UK and Ireland, with Nana Mzhavanadze, Malkhaz Erkanidze, and Nino Naneishvili being among the most regular visitors. The teaching of Frank Kane and Carl Linich (see below) has also been influential. Many of the songs originally taught by Edisher and Joseph can be found in the book *99 Georgian Songs*, conceived by Edisher in collaboration with the CPR and still one of the most significant sources available to singers outside Georgia.

A few brief reflections will aid the reader’s understanding of the serendipitous match between Georgian polyphony and the soil in which it so readily took root in the UK. It is significant to note that the original encounter took place in the context of a specific kind of contemporary theatre practice and voicework pioneered by the CPR. An interest in body awareness techniques and the role of the psyche in performance training and vocal development carries over into the remit of Giving Voice, which also concerns itself with exploring what might be learnt from the vocal expressions of other cultures as part of the quest to harness the full potential of the human voice. One of the experimental theatre companies in the CPR’s international orbit that has pursued its own close association with Georgia is Teatr ZAR in Poland. “Zar” refers to the ancient funeral laments still practiced in the region of Svaneti and pays homage to the company’s formation during a series of research expeditions to Georgia between 1999 and 2003. ZAR’s work is founded on the conviction that “art is not only complementary to religion but can fill the dynamic chasm between the everyday and transcendent life” (<http://www.teatrzar.net/en/teatr-zar-2/>), a formulation that points to the stream of exotic spiritualism discussed earlier. Georgian sacred songs – in this case, sung by the actors themselves – fulfill an elemental ritual function in the company’s perfor-

mances, most notably in the award-winning triptych *Gospels of Childhood*¹⁵

Georgia's ancient polyphonic songs did not only satisfy a need for theatre practitioners in search of ritual resonance. Giving Voice director Joan Mills comments on how they also filled a void sensed by British singers in a culture where most folk songs from the distant past are for solo voices, and where most harmony songs sung today – even in Wales, famous for its choral tradition – date back no further than the late 18th century. The Georgian songs, with their compelling vitality, struck a chord that was as much existential as it was musical: “They still have a place within daily life, at the table, and express the feelings, hopes, and sympathies of a community” (Mills 2003). Edisher's musical convictions were also closely aligned with the core tenet of the Natural Voice Network to which many of the UK's community choir leaders belong – namely, that “singing is everyone's birthright, regardless of musical experience or ability” (<https://www.naturalvoice.net/>). Edisher's statement in an introduction to one of his workshops for Giving Voice, cited in the Preface to *99 Georgian Songs* (Mills 2015: VII), clearly chimes with this ethos: “Everybody without exception has the ability to sing, just the same as to laugh, cry, and run. It is from God”. Edisher's supportive and accessible teaching style and the importance he placed on setting the songs in their cultural context similarly matched principles that are central to natural-voice practice.

While Edisher continued to develop his work in the UK, Joseph Jordania and Nino Tsitsishvili acted as lynchpins for establishing the Georgian singing community in Australia, following their relocation to Melbourne in 1995. The male-voice choir Gorani was eager to add Georgian songs to its existing Bulgarian repertoire and Joseph and Nino also formed the trio Golden Fleece, together with Gorani member Christoph Maubach. Melbourne Georgian Choir, a larger mixed-voice community choir, was formed in 2010. Gorani also had its counterpart in an all-female formation that participated in the Tbilisi symposia first as Breathing Space and later as Utskho Suneli. The formations Alilo and Tsinskaro appeared more recently, again with some overlap in membership. Joseph also aided the establishment of Perth as a centre for Georgian singing in Western Australia. The Georgian choir Lile grew out of workshops Joseph was invited to lead there in 2003. Two male ensembles, Voicemale and Spooky Men of the West (now Men of the West), were formed the following year, taking their inspiration from the men-only workshops led by Joseph and by Stephen Taberner, founder and director of the original Spooky Men's Chorale, for which one of the main inspirations was the singing of Georgian men (and initially, a recording of the Rustavi Choir). The ensemble Shalva later emerged as an offshoot of Lile, and this in turn gave rise to Radujlja, which performs a broader Eastern European repertoire, as does Chela, a community choir formed in 2020. This brief snapshot of the Australian–Georgian encounter alerts us to another facet of the appeal of Georgian polyphony: Georgia's musical heritage is weighted towards men's repertoire; structurally, the songs offer voice parts that hold greater interest for male choir members than those more often assigned to them; and the typically raw, muscular, full-blown performance style brings a refreshing sense of vocal release, emotional gratification, and male camaraderie (see Taberner 2010).

The story of how Georgian singing became established in North America takes a somewhat different form. Among its main protagonists are two American singers, Frank Kane and Carl Linich, who are

¹⁵ Kamila Klamut pays homage to Lia Salakaia, who played a key role in the teaching of traditional Georgian chant and its dissemination around Georgia, as ZAR's “first, most important guide to Georgian music” (Klamut and Fret 2020)

now celebrated teachers of the repertoire. Frank first encountered Georgian songs as a member of the Yale Russian Chorus and first visited Georgia with the Chorus in 1984. The following year, he founded America's first Georgian choir, the Kartuli Ensemble. This eventually gave rise to Trio Kavkasia, formed in 1994 by Alan Gasser, Stuart Gelzer, and Carl Linich. Other American ensembles with a long history are Kitka and Slaveya. Kitka (based in Oakland, California) was founded in 1979 and brought together singers from different ethnic backgrounds to perform women's vocal traditions from Eastern Europe. Slaveya (based in Washington, D.C.), again a women's ensemble, has been performing a cappella vocal music from Eastern Europe and the Caucasus since its formation in 1984. These singers were part of a broader current of engagement with multicultural music-making, and more particularly with music from the Balkans, in America.¹⁶ Other ensembles currently or recently active in the USA include Niavi in Washington, Alioni in Chicago, Supruli in New York, onefourfive in Seattle, and The Other Georgia in Boston. Canada's first Georgian choir was Darbazi, founded by Alan Gasser in 1995 as an off shoot of the Kartuli Ensemble. The Canadian base subsequently expanded to include Machari, ZARI, Ori Shalva and Gabo's Trio in Toronto, and Harira and Voisa in Montreal.

The members of Trio Kavkasia plunged deeper than most into their first-hand exploration and immersive study of Georgian polyphony on its home ground, embarking on a musical odyssey that included a five-month stay in Tbilisi in 1995 (during which they received private coaching from Anzor Erkomashvili), followed by a return visit in 1997 that took them to the regions of Svaneti and Guria. These adventures are brought vividly to life in Stuart Gelzer's entertaining memories, recently published as *Six Reasons to Travel: An American Singer in Georgia* (Gelzer 2022). Carl went on to develop his trademark "songmaster tours" in Georgia and these continue to provide opportunities for more experienced singers to study with songmasters in different regions, while Carl's own teaching is suited to singers across the spectrum, from those taking their first steps in Georgian singing to those who are more advanced.

Meanwhile, Frank Kane had turned his attention to furthering the cause of Georgian singing in France, after relocating to Paris in 1988. Alongside founding the male-voice ensemble Marani and its female counterpart Irinola (in 1993 and 1997), he invited songmasters from Georgia to lead workshops in Paris. Frank has also developed his own brand of teaching based on Georgian polyphony and now leads residential workshops in Britain, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, North America, and elsewhere, as well as in France. It is noteworthy that these workshops are intended not as a means of acquiring Georgian song repertoire as an end in itself, but rather as a training school for exploring and developing vocal technique in a way that will enable non-Georgians to come closer to the characteristic, yet elusive, "Georgian sound".

As has happened elsewhere, the Georgian singing scene in France itself has continued to expand and diversify. Mze Shina, formed in 1996 and now a professional group (based in Rennes), counts as another of the more established foreign ensembles. Those that appeared in France in later years include Madrikali in Paris, Djamata in Rennes, Angeorgien and Satchukari in Angers, Samshabati in Puy de Domes, Kalebi in Le-Puy-en-Velay, Madlobebi in the Cévennes, Tsitsinatela in Caen, Akhali Talgha in Coutances, and Didi Sopeli in Moutiers-au-Perche (the last three directed by Georgian musician Teimu-

¹⁶ For a fascinating account of the history of Balkan music in the United States and its relationship to broader socio-cultural developments, see Laušević 2007.

raz Artalakva). Among the teachers now in demand to lead Georgian singing workshops in France is Zoé Perret, a French-born singer who has lived for many years in Georgia, where she is a respected performer of Georgian songs and also the founder of the Franco-Georgian ensemble Kimilia.

In Germany, a fascination with Georgian singing was sparked by Ruth Olshan's documentary film *Wie Luft zum Atmen* (2005), in which Tamar Buadze and her then-newly established women's choir Tutarchela (based in the run-down post-industrial town of Rustavi) played a prominent role. Tamar went on to develop a close connection with both Germany and Switzerland. She continues to work with Franziska Welti and her two women's choirs, Singfrauen Winterthur and its younger sister-choir Singfrauen Berlin. This long-standing collaboration has taken the form of a programme of cultural exchange, with mutual visits and joint concerts in Switzerland, Germany, and Georgia; some of these activities have also included members of the Berlin-based women's choir Die Fixen Nixen. Imke McMurtrie and her choir Femmes Vocales in Lüneburg worked with Tamar and Tutarchela in a similar way and it was this partnership that led to the creation of another substantial songbook created for singers outside Georgia, *Songbook Georgia/Liederbuch Georgien*. In this collection, pride of place is given to lesser-known songs from the Georgian women's repertoire. In this story, then, women's songs are in the spotlight – and not only as repertoire that is often overshadowed by the predominance of men's songs in Georgia's polyphonic heritage, but also for their potential to help cultivate emotional fortitude. Given the prominence of healing songs in Georgian women's repertoire, it is not surprising to find that these and other songs have lent themselves to being used in therapeutic contexts in Germany and elsewhere.¹⁷ Georgian songs more broadly have fulfilled a therapeutic or restorative function for many German singers for whom German folk songs had been tainted by their association with the Nazi regime. In what we might view as a process of cultural healing, Georgian songs provided a substitute that allowed them to take pleasure in singing together again. Today, Georgian song enthusiasts have regular opportunities to replenish and refresh their repertoire through workshops led by Nana Mzhavanadze and Frank Kane, as well as Tamar Buadze. Named ensembles (some operating relatively informally) include Gonja!, Trio Santeli, Trio Kvirioni, Nabadi, Gulsaro, Axla, and Mze Shina. Clusters of singers that have formed in Hamburg, Bremen, Lüneburg, Lübeck, Freiburg, Munich, Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, Potsdam, and elsewhere also continue to grow.

As these stories indicate, Georgian singers themselves have played a fundamental and proactive role in the dissemination of Georgian songs to singing communities across the world. The websites and biographies of foreign choirs typically detail the Georgian teachers with whom choir members have studied: these often include revered songmasters from the older generation – many no longer alive – such as Islam Pilpani, Polikarpe Khubulava, Andro Simashvili, and Tristan and Guri Sikharulidze, as well as singers from the most prominent of the younger ensembles active today. Thousands of foreign singers have also taken part in study tours and singing camps in Georgia. Singing families in villages such as Lenjeri and Lakhushdi in Svaneti, Merisi in Achara, Oni in Racha, and Bukistsikhe in Guria have developed facilities

¹⁷ Tamar and Imke write: "As Georgian polyphonic singing has become better known in the West, so it is increasingly found to be an effective method of creating physical and mental harmony. As well as supporting personal development, singing together, with a concentration on harmonic experience, can play an important part in music therapy, rehabilitation, and preventative medicine" (Buadze and McMurtrie 2018: 182).

that allow them to host visiting groups from overseas, while Village Harmony has a well-established base in the small town of Signaghi in Kakheti. A detailed discussion of this development as a form of musical tourism can be found in Matthew Knight's article in this volume.

Through their performances in their home countries, the singers play what might be viewed as an ambassadorial role in helping to promote Georgian culture to many different kinds of audiences. Alongside formal concerts and festival performances, they typically take their music to listeners in a range of informal settings, such as schools and care homes, book launches and poetry readings, benefit concerts for charities and social events organised by the local Georgian community. To give but one example, in 2018 (just a year after its foundation) the Finnish choir *Tevri* performed on nineteen occasions at locations that included not only local festivals but also restaurants, churches and chapels, a library, and flash mobs on the street. As these brief examples suggest, the primary aim is not usually to present a professional performance in a conventional concert venue. Rather, much of the activity in which these choirs engage is positioned in the realm of broader cultural and educational endeavours, community service, and lending support to other local causes. This might be construed as a reciprocal act whereby choir collectives seek to share and "give back" something of the gift they feel they have received from Georgia.

Georgian polyphony and intercultural performance: final thoughts

I conclude with a few final reflections framed by themes drawn from the literature on world music in education and intercultural performance. In the USA, world music ensembles in universities have existed since the 1950s. At UCLA, Mantle Hood championed performance as an integral part of the study of ethnomusicology and established what he called "performance-study groups" as a means of developing bemusicality in his students. These groups as they exist in the 21st century are the subject of the edited volume *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles*. The Georgian ensembles discussed in the present article may exist in a rather different milieu from those attached to institutes of higher education, but they typify what Ted Solís, in his introduction to the book, terms the "experience ensemble": in this kind of ensemble, participants "embrace a second (cultural) childhood" through their encounter with an entirely new kind of music from elsewhere in the world. The "experience ensemble" has its counterpart in the "realization ensemble", in which students enroll "not primarily for mind-opening cultural experiences, but rather to realize pre-existing musical skills": this designation would apply to the orchestral and choral ensembles that are staple of most university music departments and conservatoires (Solís 2004: 6–7). Regarding the question "What are we doing when we perform the music of 'the other'?", several of the book's contributors address issues of representation. For Michelle Kisliuk and Kelly Gross, authors of a chapter about teaching BaAka ("pygmy") music and dance, "the goal is not *imitation* but *interpretation*" (2004: 253). Resonating with the notion of anthropology as cultural translation, interpretation is a more productive way of viewing what performers might offer in their role as a bridge between an audience exposed to an unfamiliar form of music detached from its cultural context and the music as it is experienced and understood in its place of origin. In the following extract from Borjghali's statement of its "choir vision", notions of interpretation (as opposed to impersonation) combine with my earlier consideration of how Georgian songs might compensate for some kind of lack in one's home culture: "While we

know that we will never be Georgian, we aim to take our audiences on a journey beyond our everyday life experience, to remember a time when those who lived before us lived closer to the natural world, and when the turning of the seasons and key moments of transition such as birth, death, and marriage, were celebrated through time honoured songs, dances, and rituals” (“Letter to New Members”, February 2022). Being able to journey and remember in this way also becomes part of the gift.

The principles that form the foundation for UNESCO’s safeguarding imperatives – aimed at protecting endangered heritage and preserving cultural diversity – include the conviction that oral and intangible heritage plays an essential role not only in national development but also in “tolerance and harmonious interaction between cultures” (UNESCO 2001: 5). The ramifications of the discursive shift from national tradition to world heritage and how exactly this plays out in practice may be problematic but, combined with a parallel shift in the creative arts world from spectator to participant, this shift forms a fundamental part of the conceptual tide that has allowed the transnational Georgian singing network to flourish. Perhaps most importantly, it has facilitated a form of mutually rewarding exchange through intercultural encounters, not only between Georgians and non-Georgians but also between singers of many different nationalities who have been brought together by their shared passion for Georgian songs. The stories I have told as part of this article will, I hope, have furthered the reader’s understanding of why Georgian polyphony was so supremely well suited to this particular manifestation of how music does its work in the world.

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CHAPTER 4

MODERN METHODS AND APPROACHES OF TEACHING GEORGIAN SINGING FOR FOREIGNERS

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GEORGIAN MUSIC FROM AN ORFF-SCHULWERK PERSPECTIVE IDEAS, EXAMPLES & METHODOLOGY¹

Introduction

This article attempts, on the one hand, to familiarize the reader with the educational methodology and ideas developed by two essential figures in 20th-century music education in Europe: Carl Orff (1895–1982), the very well-known composer particularly famous for his work *Carmina Burana* among other compositions; and Gunild Keetman (1904–1990), an outstanding German music pedagogue of her time. They were both the creators of the so-called “Orff-Schulwerk” or “Music for Children”, an educational philosophy based on three pillars: improvisation, dance-movement, and instrumental praxis.

On the other hand, and taking in consideration parameters such as modality, multipart elaboration techniques, or social dance, common kinships will be established between the Orff-Schulwerk principles and some traditional music from Georgia in order to discover and enjoy this fabulous and unique music in the context of the music classroom. In this sense, one of the purposes of this approach is to show the natural interaction that exists between music education and musicology (or other domains) because, incomprehensibly, they are normally considered or treated as isolated non-communicating fields, ignoring that both constitute two sides of the same coin, in other words, “music”



Carl Orff, Gunild Keetman and one of the *Orff-Schulwerk* Volumes

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² Carl Orff Foundation, Dießen am Ammersee (Germany): www.orff.de/en/institutions/carl-orff-foundation/

1. What is *Orff-Schulwerk*? Its Origin and Purposes

In a way similar to that which Igor Stravinsky experienced towards the end of his life, the Bavarian composer Carl Orff also felt a strong attraction and interest in the surprising harmonic language of Georgian polyphonies. In personal conversations with Liselotte Orff (Carl Orff's widow at the time) in 2007, at her house in Diessen am Ammersee, Germany (the future Carl Orff Museum), I was able not only to learn more about Orff's thoughts on music, but she also commissioned me to create the Georgian Orff Association in Tbilisi, about which I'll talk later on. Unfortunately, Carl Orff could not delve deeper or let himself be inspired by the originality and complexity of Georgian music; had it been so, I am convinced that he would have allowed his works to be impregnated with the harmonic climate of Georgian polyphonies and include the particularities of that musical system at the *Orff-Schulwerk*. In any case, the "ancestral" aura that is heard in some passages of *Carmina Burana*, can in a way evoke certain harmonic colours coming from the liturgical chants of Shemokmedi Monastery (located in the Guria region near the Black Sea), that in some moments refer directly to the vocal music of the Middle Ages.

It was thanks to the conversations between Carl Orff and the ethnomusicologist Curt Sachs (1881–1959), concerning what was pejoratively named "primitive music", that the composer began to reflect on the richness of those musical legacies in terms of musicality and expressivity, as well as the natural abilities developed when performing it. He noted very clearly as well the loss of artistic and humanistic skills that comes with musical virtuosity being the sole objective, as was desired in Western music.

The absence of musical practice in daily life and its non-inclusion in the primary stages of general learning in Europe, was for Carl Orff, a lack that inhibited acquiring and empowering artistic and personal development, not only from an individual but also a collective point of view. The holistic concept "voice-body-spirit" and the symbiosis between music and daily life that Carl Orff observed existing in oral tradition societies, became essential objectives.

The creation of the Orff-Schulwerk method started by following a basic principle: "We all have a creative and expressive potential that needs to be developed from childhood; movement, language, improvisation, creation, and instrument praxis must be our main tools for the natural assimilation of music".

And this is something that Carl Orff found basic when looking at traditional music coming from ancestral cultures like Africa, Asia, the Mediterranean... etc, and of course, in the short time he knew about Georgia and its music, he sensed that something similar was happening there. In general, he pointed out that this music not only gave support to circumstances linked to daily life, as a function, ritual, or pure entertainment, but that it was also practiced by the individuals of the community and transmitted from generation to generation with no deliberate teaching, a tradition as a process of transmission. The social context itself, observation, imitation, and the continuity of musical practice thanks to the "living models" represented by the adult figures, ensured the prevalence of music as an essential identity code for a symbolic community. From a systematic point of view, the rediscovery of the pentatonic scales, modal gammas, basic musical structures such as the *rondo* form, *antiphonal* and *responsorial* ways of organising songs, the *bourdon* or superimposition of *ostinati* as multipart proceedings, improvisation based on rhythmic-melodic variations, or the immense value of movement and dance, all became for Carl Orff keys that opened new ways of teaching and acquiring musical knowledge based on experimenting and

systematizing, that is, first conceiving and after, conceptualizing.

The development of movement expression as a music learning tool, meant for the composer that on the way to formalizing a dance or creating choreographic figures which fit neatly into set forms where the body and the group act as a single block, the body itself offers us multiple possibilities of expression, both individually and collectively, reacting on that which the music suggests. By experimenting with this, we can discover for ourselves possibilities of interaction with other musical and artistic parameters: the body produces sound and is a potential musical instrument that can be used in limitless ways, depending only on our imagination and ability.

During daily play, children's body and sound language are used with the freedom that physiognomy and space allow. So, in a similar way, instrumental practice can become an active and direct part of this learning process, as a natural extension of game dynamics. We can make music by involving hands, arms, legs, torso, voice, and the objects that sound around us, movement ... alone or within a group. The methodological principles systematized in the Orff-Schulwerk: Musik Für Kinder are in a way a consequence of the ergonomics and body naturalness arising from games, stimulated by sounds or music, extended to practice and performing through didactic instruments and ensembles.

Carl Orff worked on this ideal in close collaboration with his colleague Gunild Keetman, who was the one who put into practice the first experimental ideas of the method by taking advantage of her teaching at the Günter-Schule located in Kaulbachstraße (Munich); and it began to bear fruit. The use of instruments available to the students, such as tambourines, timpani, recorders, claves, castanets, maracas, etc, allowed for the establishment of the first guidelines by composing specific pieces such as *Barbarische Suite* (*Barbaric Dance*, 1930), *Stäbetanz* (*Stick Dance*, 1930) and *Paukentanz* (*Timpani Dance*, 1935).

The incorporation of instruments from other cultures – like how it happened in the classical orchestral repertoire, particularly in the percussion family – became an aspect that greatly enriched the ensemble sound, but also enlarged and extended the transcultural relationships that the Orff Schulwerk still strives for today; the adaptation of the method in any place and context is an unquestionable factor of Orff's "Music for Children" domain. Furthermore, and regarding the artistic capacities that can be developed in children, Carl Orff's vision of music education's future reveals the deep intuition the composer had sensed regarding the essential role that music has to play in the process of individual and collective growth, as it works in traditional music. This fact opened the door to his particular interest in, among others, African, Hellenic, Latin American, and Asian musical cultures, allowing him to verify by practicing the close ties between his idea and the dimension that music acquires in the communities where praxis precedes theory. Therefore, for Carl Orff, "nothing like doing music".

And through this prism, Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman created and developed an enormous musical corpus of vocal and instrumental music that constitutes the Orff Schulwerk, pieces compiled in a collection of 5 volumes with different contents of progressively increasing difficulty, each of which attends to different needs or reflects particular aspects of systematics, emphasizing those basic elements that will provide the student with comprehensive musical knowledge and a practical control of music parameters: structures, scale typologies, chords, harmonic functions, superimposition techniques, and multipart procedures and language (texts, poems, rhymes, tongue-twisters...), all configuring a universal idea for

creating and learning music. Following are the 5 volumes and their contents, published by Schott Verlag Editors (Germany)³:

- I. Volume I: PENTATONIC
- II. Volume 2: MAJOR, DRONE BASS TRIADS
- III. Volume 3: MAJOR, DOMINANT AND SUBDOMINANT TRIADS
- IV. Volume 4: MINOR, DRONE BASS TRIADS
- V. Volume 5: MINOR, DOMINANT AND SUBDOMINANT TRIADS

2. Adapting Orff Schulwerk to Other Music Cultures

The opening in 1961 of the Orff Institut in Salzburg (Austria)⁴, an elementary music and dance education centre within Mozarteum University, became the main reference and a meeting point for teachers from all over the world training in Orff Methodology. Students coming from all corners of the planet, learn in a practical way the ideas of Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman in order to apply them in their respective places of origin. Since then, and after more than 60 years, the different cultures represented by the enormous list of students and teachers have also constituted one of the pillars of the centre's cultural and musical richness. The students, including the one who writes these lines, had the opportunity to experience a learning process that is in permanent transformation thanks, above all, to the incorporation of those "exotic" musical elements coming from other parts of the planet.

It is worth highlighting the presence of students who – involuntarily – became "indirect" collaborators (although "direct" later on) with Carl Orff, due to the interest their music aroused in the composer; traditions woven from time immemorial, and that include instrumental and vocal music for ritual or entertainment circumstances, drama and other stage practices, which fully coincide with the principles, that for Orff, constituted the comprehensive training of a teacher, not only in musical but also artistic terms: Where to look if not in our own roots?!

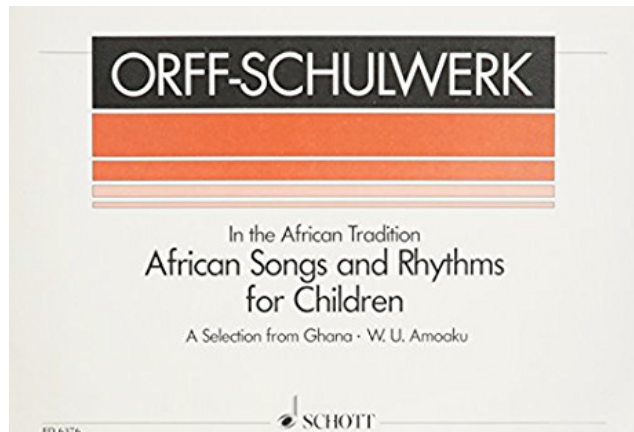
A significant reference for these students was Polyxeni Matéi (1902–1999), who met the composer during his first stay at the Günterschule in Munich (1935–1936) and later, while studying at the recently created Orff-Institut in Salzburg (1961). Matéi not only introduced the ideas of Orff-Schulwerk in Greece (*Polyxeni Matéi School of Rhythmic Gymnastics*) in the 1970s, but also established a friendship and close collaboration with Carl Orff, who was deeply attracted to Hellenic culture and nourished by its richness. To understand the importance of this ancestral source for Orff, we need only look at the collection of Goliard songs from the 11th and 12th centuries that were the source of inspiration and study leading to the composition of *Carmina Burana*, composed between 1935–1936 and one of the most performed pieces of music today.

³ Schott Verlag (Schott Music Group): www.schott-music.com/en/

⁴ Orff-Institut, Mozarteum University Salzburg (Austria): <http://orff.moz.ac.at>



Orff-Schulwerk adaptation of Greek music by Polyxeni Mátei. ©Schott Verlag



Orff-Schulwerk adaptation of African music by W.K. Amoaku ©Schott Verlag

In a similar way, the composer William Komla Amoaku (1940–2012), master drummer of Ghana (Africa), went through Orff-Schulwerk training at the Orff Institut in 1967. There, he had the opportunity to transmit to Carl Orff the importance and the deep meaning that music acquires in Africa, particularly in the Akan, Ga, and Ewe cultures. As in Orff-Schulwerk, the use of voice, body, instruments, and improvisation in Africa are in constant interaction with existence. One of Carl Orff’s closest collaborators, a follower of his educational ideas, professor and director of the Orff Institut and other Orff institutions, Dr. Hermann Regner (1928–2008), travelled to Ghana in order to learn first-hand about the music and its transmission mechanisms. Thanks to his contact with Professor Kwabena Nketia (1921–2019), considered the “father of African musicology”, and with whom I also had the opportunity of debating music research and education on different occasions, he found that Orff-Schulwerk was the principal and natural educational and comprehensive practice used in Africa. Carl Orff’s mission then consisted of the transcendental and meticulous task of systematizing all these ideas by also using instruments typical of

these cultures: xylophones, metallophones, drums, and many other small percussion instruments commonly used by children and youths for accompanying their songs and dances. One manifestation of this adaptation is Willam Amoaku's 1971 edition of *African Songs and Rhythms for Children*.

In a similar way, other editions adapted to different contexts, cultures, and children's music songs, games, and dances, appeared. One of these was a partial adaptation of Orff-Schulwerk in Spanish through *Música para Niños*, done in 1965 by Guillermo Graetzer (1914–1993). And, of course, the full adaptation in English of all its volumes under the title *Music for Children*, made in 1957 by the British educator Margaret Murray (1921–2015).

The systematization work carried out by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman at Orff-Schulwerk is commendable from the following point of view: starting from a “simple” but smart idea, it is possible to disseminate a whole inventory of musical practices that can take us into quite varied geographical and historical contexts. The different volumes comprising the collection include musical creations that radiate originality and inspiration and allow teachers and students to cover the basic musical elements by playing instruments. Without going into detail about the multiple connections to other music that Orff-Schulwerk can provide us with, one of the transcendental points of the method is the possibility of applying our own imagination to the educational reality, that is, our needs in the classroom, the group, and the reality in which we work.

3. Orff-Schulwerk Associations in the World (OSA) and GEORFF

Nowadays, there are approximately 40 countries in the world that have one or more International Orff-Schulwerk Associations (OSA) that work or apply this methodology with hundreds of teachers, many associated music schools, and thousands of students of all ages.



GeOrff (Georgian Orff-Schulwerk Association) Poster and Logo ©*Georff*

One of the youngest associations is the so-called *Georff* (Georgian Orff-Schulwerk Association), located in Tbilisi that began its activity in 2015 thanks to the personal wish and impetus given by Liselotte Orff with support from the Carl Orff Foundation, facilities provided on the grounds of the Goethe-Institut in Tbilisi, and the timely participation of the Elisabeth Gast Foundation and the Tbilisi State Conservatoire, where some of the workshops were organized. The logistical organisation and main teaching work required for building the association were done over the course of many years by Polo Vallejo, who was at the time (and still today) developing ethnomusicological research focused on Georgian polyphony. Since its beginning in 2015, the first formal president of *Georff* was Ekaterina Chubinidze, who worked closely with her team to build the association. It is important to point out that, despite working on models based on different musical languages coming from a big number of cultures around the world, one of the most outstanding principles in Orff's philosophy consists in, by way of this method, not only keeping but extolling the musical particularities and identity of each culture. Orff-Schulwerk aspires to guide music teachers in their educational work with students by suggesting procedures and giving conceptual and technical tools for practising and developing vocal, body, or instrumental abilities, and expanding their creativity and artistic expression. What it never tries to do is supplant cultural identities, but rather the opposite, to reinforce them.

The significant amount of music created for this purpose in many contexts is contained in several readily available printed editions, audio, and video recordings. And mainly all these materials are associated with the large collection of didactic musical instruments mentioned before: xylophones, metallophones, glockenspiels, recorders, and a highly varied collection of small percussion sound producers and any other self-created object that can be used as an instrument. In this sense, a very close interaction among the Instruments Factory *Studio 49* provides the main material support for applying Orff Methodology.



Orff-Schulwerk Instruments Ensemble by *Studio 49*⁵

⁵ Studio 49 Instrument builders: <https://www.studio49.de/en/>

4. Approaching Georgian Music Grammar through Orff Methodology

In recent times, and due to the reach that music has acquired through the media and audio-visual platforms, Georgian music has gone from being totally unknown to a large part of the public, to having an increasing presence in live concerts, radio broadcasts, and television programs. The dissemination of its polyphonies, as well as instrumental music and dances performed by many Georgian ensembles around the world, is constantly expanding, and the uniqueness and recognition of some ensembles such as Basiani (State Ensemble of Georgian Folk Singing), place Georgian music on the pedestal, not only of oral tradition polyphonies, but of the polyphonic genre, no matter the style. Despite this, the reaction that listeners experience when listening to it for the first time is always of great surprise, a kind of uncertainty, but followed by the enthusiasm and admiration that it arouses when discovering its originality, complexity, and deep emotion. Although there is music in Georgia that is perfectly understandable on a first hearing, either because of its harmonic proximity to Western musical language (as in the songs from the Kakheti region or the lyrical-love ballads of Samegrelo), or because of its structural and rhythmic simplicity (dances from Svaneti, for example), the impression changes when listening to the “intricate” banquet songs or the religious polyphonies of Shemokmedi Monastery, both located in the Guria region, that are characterized by having a kind of “indecipherable” harmonic language to which our ears are not accustomed. In this sense, and as a first reaction, those examples are branded as musically “dissonant”, a term not contemplated in Georgian musical vocabulary where consonance and dissonance occupy the same status in terms of beauty and expression. Something similar happens when contemplating the extreme virtuosity among the “acrobatic” dances of the Achara region. If there is something that characterizes and singles out Georgian music in general terms, it is its modal nature and its polyphonic praxis, in many cases containing an extraordinary harmonic originality.

In this sense, there is no single reference in the world to a modal polyphony, and hence the difficulty of approaching its harmonic language from a pedagogical point of view, unless we are talking about a choir that takes on the formal study of difficult repertoires, as could be the case here.

The particularity that defines the Georgian harmonic language – consisting of the combination of chords and intervals of a variable nature, and serving up unpredictable and surprising colours to the Western ear – makes it difficult as well to apply it to didactic instruments such as those mentioned above. However, one of the constitutive principles of this system, “modality and polyphony”, in some way allows the finding of connection points or the establishing of bridges between Georgia and Orff-Schulwerk. The main purpose here would be some formulas that could bring our students closer to the harmonic world of Georgian music, and make easier the understanding of Georgian musical grammar, opening our ears to new sounds and other means of artistic emotions. Delving into the musical universe of Georgia and immersing ourselves into these polyphonies is one of the most overwhelming musical and human experiences that we can have. This teaching experience always provides a very special satisfaction, and this impression is even more surprising when one discovers that today there is music with the potential of awakening emotions that we all have “asleep” somewhere. As I have heard someone in Georgia, whom I don’t remember now, once say, “Polyphony is a way of existing, thinking, and acting, not only related to music but to life”.

5. Music Parameters: Rhythm, Modes, Harmony & Multipart Singing

- Rhythmic aspects

Among the elements that make up Georgian music, the rhythmic aspects do not present great complexity or difficulty when it comes to analysis. In general, this is music based on symmetrical structures, among which responsorial-antiphonal forms (regular alternation of song sections), or *rondo* types where alternating couplets and choruses stand out, are all supported by proportional figures and a regular periodicity. Phrases usually have a whole number (even) of pulsations and the rhythmic figures are built on the basis of equal proportions derived from binary (2) or ternary (3) subdivisions. Combined formulas that generate asymmetric structures like *aksak*⁶, are practically non-existent. Only in those songs based on what I personally call “contrasting counterpoint”, as is the case of certain music from Achara and Guria, do the melodic lines intertwine in such a way that, due to the effect of the intersection of parameters, an extremely high level of rhythmic complexity is suggested. But in general, approaching the music of Georgia in order to learn from its rhythmic elements does not constitute a serious didactic problem.

- Melodic aspects: Modality

The musical models contained in Orff-Schulwerk pay much attention to working with pentatonic scales (mainly *anhemitonic*⁷). This is due to the ease of building “good sounding” music for a child’s ear, like playing on the black keys of the piano. The use of scales/modes where only major 2nd and major-minor 3rd intervals take part (as in Do – Re – Mi – Sol – La), facilitate the acquisition of an instrumental technique that considers the other musical parameters in terms of “avoiding making mistakes” while playing.

Formal structures, constructions of phrases or the ability to develop rhythmic-melodic cells based on improvisation, are much more accessible using pentatonic scales. The technical work regarding the use of mallets and drumsticks on xylophones is more approachable from a pentatonic gamma than from a modal or tonal range that imply more hierarchical relationships between the notes and a precise knowledge of harmonic functions. In any case, Orff-Schulwerk is always capable of “widening” its field of action and expanding the musical corpus applicable to the major or minor modes (and its triads), through different accompaniments based on *bourdon* or *ostinati*, among others. One of the primary objectives of this practice is to be able to make music from the start, not necessarily beginning with a previous theoretical basis. Hence the use of the pentatonic scale and materials that work with it, is more developed and extensive in Orff’s Schulwerk than anywhere else. However, the melodic and harmonic elements defining Georgian music are much more challenging to approach through didactic instruments, although a basis can always be established on which to begin to approach and understand its language. The so-called “old modes” that appear in the Western or Eastern liturgies, and in much traditional music not only in Europe, acquire a predominant status in Georgia as the chants are based above on the melodic or harmonic combination of one mode in the same chant, producing the sense of modulations and pluri-modality for Western ears.

An exercise that consists of recognizing by ear the mode (or modes) in which a song is based, by deciphering its typology and particularities and practicing it on instruments individually or collectively,

⁶ *Aksak*: “lame limp” in Turkish. Rhythmic combination of binary (2) and ternary (3) subdivision figures.

⁷ *Anhemitonic*: with no intermediate semitones.

is very interesting. In this sense, we can find simple and clear examples based on just one modal colour, and others in which several modes are combined. In this last case, the difficulty of setting unique reference points that determine the mode on which a song is based obligates us to recognize it starting from the final note of the chant or song (*finalis*), or in any of the cadential rests. When the main melody (not necessarily the upper voice) does not absolutely determine the nature of the mode, it is necessary to observe the notes that appear in the rest of the voices. So that, as a whole, we can establish the scale typology transversally, and therefore the main mode.

Generally speaking, the modes that appear most frequently in Georgian music correspond to those of A, G and E. Less frequent, although also present, are the D and C modes, and the F and B modes are more infrequent or practically non-existent. The fact that the first three are the most frequent may be due to characteristics such as:

- The 7th degree must always be at a distance of a whole tone from the 1st degree, a condition that only the modes of A – G – E – D meet, thus ruling out the modes of C and F.
- D does not usually appear as the main mode, but normally is the consequence of the ascending alteration of the 7th degree in the mode of A, towards which it usually modulates provisionally.
- The H mode is excluded since the triad chord on the 1st degree (Si – Re – Fa) creates a tritone interval, usually avoided in Georgian popular music, although, nevertheless, it constitutes a characteristic “mark” of many liturgical chants coming from Gelati Monastery in the Imereti region.
- Modal Polyphony & Pluri-modality: An “Enigmatic” Challenge

From a musicological point of view, the polyphonic dimension and harmonic complexity that Georgian music exhibits in some repertoires and regions constitute its hallmark. Regarding the different types of modal scales that appear juxtaposed or superimposed in the same song and with the usual inflections to other modes, the use of chords made based on intervals of a variable nature (2nd, 4th, 5th, 7th or 9th) is added. The harmonic syntax generates a kind of vertical and horizontal combination and syntax of chords whose result is surprising to the Western ear and constitutes the cornerstone of this musical language. This is as well an aspect that becomes the greatest difficulty and the biggest challenge for the researcher who aspires to determine a Georgian harmonic theory. From a didactic point of view, this type of music poses a great challenge for the teacher, since reducing such complexity to theoretical-practical schemes or models that are approachable and practicable in the classroom is a goal that has been not yet achieved. For this reason, relying on the Orff methodology with the pedagogical aspiration of being able to approach and immerse the student in the sound and musical universe of Georgia from praxis and by listening, singing, analysing, and recreating the beauty and expression of its polyphonic songs, means accepting a musical challenge that can become a tremendous motivating goal.

A Practical Example: A Georgian Song Examined through Orff-Schulwerk.

If we think of a music class with children or young people, the following humorous song “Kakhuri Shairebi”, from the Kakheti region, shows at first glance that it is easily understandable and that it transmits a sense of familiarity that invites everyone to sing. My personal experience indicates that by simply listening to the *tutti* section refrain, one can start by using, for instance, the onomatopoeic non-semantic

syllables *ta-la-lé*. Its easy rhythmic articulation invites one to follow, almost in real time, at least the upper voice that stands out the most. In a later phase, it would be proposed to work on incorporating the rest of the voices until singing it in its entirety in 3 parts.

Talale, Georgia

Refrain

Transcription: Polo Vallejo

♩ = 90

Ta - la - le ta - le tu - li ta - la - le

Ta - la - le ta - le tu - li ta - la - le

Ta - la - le ta - le tu - li ta - la - le

Ta - la - le ta - le tu - li ta - la - le

Ta - la - le ta - le tu - li ta - la - le

Ta - la - le ta - le tu - li ta - la - le

“Kakhuri Shairebi” (refrain *Talalé*), transcription by ©Polo Vallejo

The melodic line traced by each of the three voices in the refrain is clearly perceived, suggesting the way and the direction in which the song is built up: starting in the upper voice (Si-La, 1st and 2nd measure), it continues in the middle voice (Sol-Fa-Mi-Re, first five measures) and ends in the lowest voice (Do-Re, 4th and 5th measures). These last two bars show the modal relationship that exists between degrees VII and I (C and D), at the distance of a whole-tone, and that strengthens the sense of the D mode.

The example can be very useful in the classroom: from listening, transcribing, and adapting for didactic instruments (xylophones, metallophones, and glockenspiels, or any other chosen with appropriate orchestration criteria), an interesting ensemble version can be made in which all students can participate actively, not only each one performing one of the parts, but all of them exchanging roles and playing all the instruments. This aspect (“everyone knows and plays everything”) constitutes another of the principles on which the Orff method is based and that coincides with the same characteristic of music in oral traditions: each individual that integrates a symbolic community knows the entire repertoire.

The practical session could start by practicing each part or voice on each instrument, taking into account the range of the melody or *ostinati*, and its function within the piece. In this case and starting from high to low – soprano (SX), contralto (AX), and bass xylophone (BX) – we propose building up a kind of accompaniment as *ostinati* in order to create a rhythmic-harmonic support that could serve as the basis for the main melody (or the 3 vocal parts), thus energizing the music in its most danceable sense.

The main melody and its 3-voice harmonization could be performed with a trio of recorders or any

other wind instrument doubling or alternating with the vocal version. To rhythmically accompany the piece, hand-drums, or timpani, could be used to reinforce the main parts. A short, but delicate sound produced by a contralto (or soprano) glockenspiel, (AG) would provide the whole with a brilliant sound texture, although any other metallic instrument could equally serve this purpose. Following is one of the possible simple instrumentations of the refrain of “Kakhuri Shairebi” (Talalé), arranged for an Orff Ensemble:

Talale
 For Orff Ensemble

Arrangement
 Polo Vallejo

♩ 100 In a dancing mood

The musical score is arranged for an Orff ensemble and consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes Flute, Alto Glockenspiel, Soprano Xylophone, Alto Xylophone, Bass Xylophone, and Timpani. The second system includes Fl. (Flute), AG (Alto Glockenspiel), SX (Soprano Xylophone), AX (Alto Xylophone), BX (Bass Xylophone), and imp. (Timpani). The music is in 8/8 time and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with various chords and textures.

“Kakhuri Shairebi” (refrain *Talalé*) Orff-Schulwerk adaptation by ©Polo Vallejo

The above excerpt is ideal for all students to participate as *tutti*. Between one passage and another, free improvisations can be performed as a solo, duet, trio, etc, in the D mode, an aspect that should also be worked on in advance to familiarize the students with the particularities of this mode. And as a “final

flourish”, a small choreography could be added, a basic dance using some typical dance-steps inspired by one of the Georgian circle dances. In this way, an archetypal model would be built in the “style” of Orff-Schulwerk and could serve as a gateway to the discovery of so much other Georgian music.

The ideal, and one of the objectives to be achieved, would be the establishing of a sequential order of pieces that become progressively more difficult. Orff-Schulwerk is always open to new versions, and it is only limited by one’s aspirations or the reality imposed by the classroom.

In summary, a possible formal structure for our instrumental version of “Kakhuri Shairebi” (Talalé) with an Orff Ensemble could be adjusted to the general scheme of a *rondo* form: A B A C A D A E A..., where A is the *refrain* (“*ritornello*”) and B–C–D–E are the *couplets* or improvisation parts for solo, duet, trio...etc. Adjusting everything to a “closed” version, the result could look like:

I. INTRODUCTION: free part, proposed by the teacher or by any student and as a signal for the entry of the instruments, containing elements of the *ritornello*: chords marking the general tempo, a great *tremolo* or any other proposal. The entry can be progressive and follow the order: BX + AX + SX + voices + flutes + other instruments (timpani, small percussion, and glockenspiel).

II. A SECTION: *ritornello* played by *tutti*.

III. B SECTION: improvisations in the D mode; solo, duet, trio...etc.

IV. CODA: the same *ritornello*, twice as slow, closing the piece.

*OPTIONAL: dance: a kind of “round dance” with characteristic Georgian steps.

Among the different music of Georgia (the previous being just one type), and Orff-Schulwerk, other examples could be found that present common points related to musical systematics. To cite just a few we could look, for instance, at the use of the bass-drone or the melodic-harmonic features given by the E mode, bringing us to the music practiced in Kakheti and Samegrelo, and two beautiful short pieces written by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman (included in *Música Poética*).

Links for listening to the suggested examples through the Spotify platform (or any other audio source).

- The use of bourdon:

- Kakheti Region, Georgia: *Bindisperia Sopeli*

<https://open.spotify.com/track/7x38FWs8r4IHRCIBdGuf5x?si=a4512110fcc6440b>

- Orff-Schulwerk: *In Kleinstem Raum*. “Lieder Und Tänze”

<https://open.spotify.com/track/51PHYHpVYqmKpAHIdsnlfn?si=1bff8978ab074f75>

- The Phrygian Mode (E)

- Samegrelo Region: “Veengara”, lyrical-love song with *chonguri*

<https://open.spotify.com/track/79vaI9UN6HZYqM72zl7if6?si=9fa6a69c181c4ba5>

- Orff-Schulwerk: *Andante*: “Lieder Und Spielstücke”

<https://open.spotify.com/track/7b2uXu8OzL3bTNn9bcvnVz?si=0628419e77ed469d>

Conclusion

Like language and music, pedagogy (teaching) and ethnomusicology (researching) share some common points. One discipline complements the other, just as in the natural processes through which traditional music has always flowed since time immemorial. The difference is that, while in oral tradition – except some specific repertoires – music is not taught deliberately (everyone learns it in the most organic way from mouth to ear, and imitation is the usual tool), in written tradition almost everything is pre-established and materialized in a score. In the former, musical models to imitate are always present thanks to adult figures constantly making music. Because of this lack in the West, methodologies appeared throughout the 20th century (Carl Orff, Zoltan Kodály, Edgar Willems, Maurice Martenot, Jaques Dalcroze, Shinichi Zuzuki... and others) that focused on the normalization of music learning and teaching. Some of these figures, due to their intellectual restlessness as musicians, combined their educational profile with that of researcher and creator. Paradigmatic cases, such as that of Béla Bartók, show that Music (with a capital M) is an indivisible whole, and that the different angles from which this art can be considered, provide us with additional ideas as to how those musical idioms are conceived and constructed. Pedagogy is one of those areas where tradition and modernity meet, and for this reason it can help us to understand not only those musical grammars that are different from ours, but also to experience – from praxis – the expression and emotion that they contain. Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman, with Orff-Schulwerk, went a step further and proposed to bring us closer to other musical universes by involving the voice, the body, movement and dance, improvisation, spoken language, and the use of musical instruments immediately and technically accessible for children. But that is not all. The purpose of sharing these experiences and this knowledge within the group gives to the musical praxis an artistic and humanist dimension. According to the Orff methodology, the music of Georgia can be a mirror in which a pedagogical concept revealing to us the hidden treasures it contains is projected.

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MY OBSERVATIONS ON AND METHODS FOR TEACHING THE PRINCIPLES OF GEORGIAN SINGING

While people undoubtedly have different personal reasons for wanting to sing in general and wanting to sing Georgian songs in particular, many Georgians begin to sing in childhood, inspired and encouraged by their parents, friends and school teachers. As they grow older, they may find satisfaction in the elements of Georgian culture contained in the folk songs and take pride in being part of this national expression and its continuation. They speak of their appreciation of the beauty of Georgian folk songs and especially the feeling of connection and unity with others in the process of singing. The value of *unity* is one of the most essential and omnipresent in Georgia. It finds an expression in the *supra* (ritualized meal or banquet), for example, and also in polyphonic singing.

For most of their history, Georgian folk songs were transmitted in family, village and rural settings, with little or no formal teaching, and no professional dimension. The late nineteenth century saw the arrival of new contexts for folk songs, including public performances, which progressively brought Georgian songs to urban audiences in Georgia and elsewhere in the Russian Empire, and then to audiences abroad. The State and professional ensembles gave Georgian singers more opportunities to hear and sing songs from other regions of the country. In the 1950s and 1960s in particular, the State Ensemble and the Rustavi Ensemble intentionally recruited singers from different regions who could bring their particular qualities to the repertoires, allowing the groups to present songs from many regions of Georgia with more authentic flavors. Georgian singers learned and sang songs from distant regions of their country (e.g., Hamlet Gonashvili from Kakheti, who sang songs from Guria and other regions with the State ensemble – see below). These sorts of exchanges were not totally new to Georgia however. As Shalva Japaridze (1939–2006), the Director of the Oni Ensemble, mentioned to me during our conversations in 2002, the Rachans in particular were known for their knowledge of songs from regions beyond their native Racha. Their tradition of spending periods in other regions of Georgia or even abroad, working in Guria for the tea harvests, or Kakheti for the wine harvests, meant that they had enough time to learn and sing songs of those regions. Singing together during work, at *supras*, or in other circumstances undoubtedly gave the Rachan migrant workers a way to more deeply integrate the communities that they stayed in, joining in a process of social cohesion that is an explicit part of Georgian culture. Starting in the 1980s, to the best of my knowledge, groups of non-Georgians living outside of Georgia started to form groups to learn and sing Georgian folk songs (starting with Japan and the United States, followed by many other countries in the 1990s and thereafter).

But why do non-Georgians choose to learn and sing Georgian folk songs? I first heard Georgian songs in 1982 sung by an American choir, the Yale Russian Chorus, and then on LP records in the group's

library; I then first heard Georgian folk singers live during my first visit to Georgia in June 1984.

Today, there are abundant opportunities to listen to Georgian folk songs or to watch Georgian ensembles performing thanks to the Internet. Many people come to Georgian music through interest in another form of polyphonic singing which may be classical or another style of folk polyphony (e.g., Bulgarian).

Like myself, many people who hear Georgian singing for the first time are impressed by its power and when they see groups in person or even on video, they are surprised by the apparent ease and lack of effort of the singers and the strong connection and cohesion that seems to exist among them. It is certainly in part non-Georgians' desire to experience these feelings of strength, ease, mutual awareness and connection which leads them to go beyond listening and to try to sing the songs themselves. If they do, along with the online resources, there are more learning contexts abroad (workshops, ensembles, online classes) and more opportunities to study in Georgia (at the Tbilisi Conservatory, at workshops and tours organized by various Georgian groups and singers) than ever before.

Georgians see all of the aforementioned points as essential elements of their singing, as much as the lyrics, music, and rhythms. If foreigners are singing with a great deal of effort, and without a spirit of cohesion, Georgians feel that something is missing. In my experience, they always speak of the primordial importance of a spirit of love and friendship that exists among Georgians who sing together, and consider that the ease and cohesion are part of this. I have no doubt that this is true. I and other non-Georgian learners nevertheless then face the following challenge: How do we learn to sing with ease, power, complementarity, awareness and connection, when our Georgian teachers consider these to be components that come naturally to them which cannot really be taught in the same way as lyrics and melodies?

A large part of my learning process and now teaching method has involved seeking approaches from outside the Georgian tradition that can help me and my pupils. Techniques to develop ease and power in singing exist in various schools of voice teaching, including the European teaching approaches developed essentially for classical singing. Techniques to find physical ease and body awareness such as the Alexander Technique and the Feldenkrais Method appeared in the twentieth century; older practices, such as various forms of yoga, meditation, and martial arts, aim, among other things, to develop these same dimensions. Twentieth and twenty-first century investigations of the functioning of the human autonomic nervous system likewise have inspired practices that can bring mental and physical relaxation and develop body vibration, as well as ease in experiencing awareness of and connection with other people.¹ Their explicit extension to voice teaching is a fairly recent phenomenon, but one which seems very logical and brings rapid results.

If we assume that it is impossible – and not even desirable – for foreigners to exactly imitate all aspects of the performance of certain Georgian singers, can such practices help to bring non-Georgian learners closer to the essential elements observed in Georgian folk singing? And are these elements desirable for other forms of singing? This has been my area of research and exploration.

In my experience of working with numerous Georgian singers and teachers over the course of more

¹ Porges, S., (2011) *The Polyvagal Theory* (illustrated edition), WW Norton, New York.

than thirty years, I have never encountered any Georgian who gave the sort of technical instruction and coaching than one might receive from a voice teacher in Western Europe, for example. This is not in any way surprising. As a rule, in oral tradition cultures, learning occurs through observation and repetition, and elements of “technique” are rarely verbalized or isolated². But for a song learner who has grown up in North America or Western Europe for example, there clearly seems to be something different in the voice “technique” or voice production of a group of Georgian singers. It is generally very easy for an experienced Georgian singer listening to a recording to say whether or not the people singing are Georgian, with just a few seconds of listening, but not so easy for them to say *what* exactly makes it different, technically speaking. Analyzing and understanding the physical gestures that underlie voice production simply by listening to group of singers – and still less an audio or video recording – is not easy at all.³

To the best of my knowledge, in traditional learning situations and likewise today in the *lotbari* schools (schools for training of ensemble leaders and teachers in Georgia) and in other contexts, there is no such thing as vocal pedagogy as we understand it in classical voice training. The students do their best to imitate their teachers or recordings that they hear, but without a real analysis of how the human models that they are supposed to follow are actually *producing* their sounds.

For non-Georgians, the challenge of learning to sing Georgian songs by imitating recordings of Georgian singers is still greater. In contrast with the situation that existed when I started studying Georgian songs in 1982, a great many video recordings are now easily accessible. But the in-person meetings which have always been the privileged form of transmission in Georgian folk singing are harder to come by if you live in Paris or Seattle.

Looking ahead to a time in the probably not-too-distant future, there will be few or no traditional village contexts for learning Georgian songs. It could be worthwhile, therefore, for both Georgian and non-Georgian learners, to be able to isolate essential vocal gestures or attitudes, on an individual or group level, which could be learned and practiced, just as one can practice the melodies, rhythms or words of songs.

With such an approach, there would be the hope that these essential elements could be more easily taught and transmitted.

What are the essential elements of Georgian singing?

For those who are interested in the learning and teaching of Georgian songs, it is worth asking the question: What are the essential elements of Georgian singing? There are of course the lyrics and the melodic and harmonic structures, all of which can vary significantly within a framework which traditional singers have internalized but are usually unable to explain explicitly. My learning with Georgian singers has often involved being told when I did something that violated the rules, but rarely explanations of the approach I should adopt in order to *respect* the rules.

² Arom, S., (2018) Musical Systems of Sub-Saharan Africa, in Rolf Bader ed.: *Springer Handbook of Systematic Musicology*, Cham (Switzerland), Springer International Publishing: 977–983. This general idea is developed in many articles and books by Professor Simha Arom.

³ I discuss some of my early attempts to do so in my paper: Kane, Frank (2003). Learning Techniques for Georgian Singing Used by Georgian Choruses Abroad. 1st International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony.

But what are the essential elements of Georgian folk singing, independent of a specific song or group of singers? Is it possible to speak of essential elements of all forms of Georgian folk singing? Or it is necessary, in all cases, to speak in terms of regional specificities?

I once asked the Svan singer Vakhtang Pilpani if he could easily tell the difference between a group of Svan singers singing a Svan song and a group non-Svan Georgian singers singing the same song. He replied that this was indeed very easy for him. I asked him how long it would take him to make this distinction. “One or two seconds”, he replied. One of the essential differences that Vakhtang probably heard, but of which he was not conscious, is that Svan singers begin their songs with a quiet upward glissando. In their study of Svan songs involving the recording of some one hundred and twenty songs with many different groups in different villages, and using sonogram analysis, Frank Scherbaum and Nana Mzhavanadze noted that this glissando at the beginning of musical phrases was present in all cases⁴. As such, it seems accurate to say that this is not a detail, but rather an *essential* component of Svan singing. Without it, a Svan singer realizes that there is a difference which distinguishes the performance of a Svan group from that of a non-Svan Georgian group, but doesn’t necessarily realize that it is this aspect – possibly among others – which reveals this. The question then arises: For a group of non-Svan singers (Georgian or otherwise) who want to learn Svan songs, is it important to include this element? Is it as essential as singing in the right melodic framework, or singing the correct words (or even more essential)? Are there other elements that are equally essential but have simply never been identified, because the tradition bearers are not consciously producing them as discrete phenomena and therefore cannot talk about them, and because people outside the tradition do not realize that these elements are essential, or do not even notice them?

Many listeners have noted that Svan ensembles never go flat and, in fact, often go sharp when singing. This does not seem to occur due to any conscious effort, so it must be something in the manner of the execution that causes this. Again, is this an essential element that learners from other regions of Georgia or from abroad should learn how to do to capture the essence of Svan singing, and if so, how would they go about it? And are there essential elements that apply to all Georgian songs?

Some essential technical elements

Based on my years of empirical attempts to come closer to Georgian manners of singing, there are four elements that I have found to be very important and applicable to all Georgian songs, alongside the more obvious criteria of a degree of mastery of the melodic framework, harmonic framework, rhythmic framework, and pronunciation of the words/vocables. These are: 1) Complementarity between the voice parts, 2) Ample body vibration, 3) Particular notions of how the voices meet and connect, or particular attitudes of awareness towards the other singers and other voice parts involved, and 4) Ease in singing.

By complementarity, I mean that the top, middle, and bass parts are not only singing different melodies, but also singing in different manners. This could approximately be described as the parts

⁴ Scherbaum, F., Mzhavanadze, N., Rosenzweig, S., & Müller, M. (2022). Tuning Systems of Traditional Georgian Singing Determined from a New Corpus of Field Recordings. *Musicologist*, submitted, 22 pages, and also Scherbaum, F., Loos, W., Kane, F., & Vollmer, D. (2015).

singing with different timbres, but I am more specific in my analysis and in the instructions that I give to my pupils and workshop participants. I suggest that the bass give priority to developing vibration on the surface of the face in the zone from the bottom of the jaw to just below the nostrils. I ask people singing the middle part to develop surface vibration around and behind the eyes (sphenoid bone), and people singing the top part to develop vibration in the area of the cranium above the eyebrows. Similar notions of envisaging the directing of vocal impulses towards various parts of the face are of course well-known in classical singing pedagogy⁵, but the goal is not generally to develop intense surface vibration; it is to give the voice a particular “placement” which can also be thought of as a color or timbre, terms that are somewhat ambiguous. What I am talking about here, though, is really developing vibration on the surface of and inside the body without an idea of necessarily coordinating this with a different orientation of the vocal mechanism or breathing.

A group of three singers singing three different parts of a Georgian song with these three different zones of the head activated produces a group sound which is richer and more varied in harmonics than a group singing the same song in three parts with only *one* zone activated by all of the singers (the jaw or lower face, for example), or with no particular attempt to activate surface vibration (the most common case for non-Georgians singing Georgian songs). The presence or absence of this phenomenon is, in my opinion, one of the elements that allows Georgians to quickly say whether a recording that they are listening to is sung by Georgians or non-Georgians.

The vibration in these zones of the head, and elsewhere in the body, can be achieved with exercises involving manual stimulation: rubbing, scratching, or shaking of the skin for example, done by the singers on themselves, or by another person touching the singers. Another technique that I use is to ask learners to imitate people who use the particular types of surface vibration that we are trying to enhance. That can mean imitating someone in the room, in the context of a group workshop, or a well-known actor or singer, or a person observed in video images.

For those who like visual feedback, the development of the vibration in these zones of the body can be monitored using a simple sonogram program (e.g., Overtone Analyzer software from Sygyt Software) on a computer, tablet or smartphone. The lines representing certain harmonics will become more pronounced as the vibration changes. Observers who are listening during the exercises can generally hear a progressive change in the sound. The person doing the exercise likewise usually hears a change in their sound or feels a change in the body (stronger vibration). The awareness of these changes can vary depending on singers’ capacity to hear the harmonics produced by their voices when they are singing (in a normal way – in other words, not intentionally trying to enhance harmonics as in overtone singing). There are voice teachers such as Daïnouri Choque in France and Wolfgang Saus in Germany who teach techniques to increase this awareness of the presence of harmonics on the normal singing voice in group singing. This search for intentional enhancement of common harmonics of different parts in group singing is described in the work of Bernard Lortat-Jacob on Sardinian singing⁶. In her recent article

⁵ For example: Husler, F. and Rodd-Marling Y., (1976) *The Physical Nature of the Vocal Organ*, Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., London.

⁶ Lortat-Jacob, B., (1998) *Chants de Passion, Au cœur d’une confrérie de Sardaigne*. Le Cerf, Paris.

presented at the Tbilisi Symposium⁷, Michèle Castellengo uses sonographic presentations to demonstrate that Georgian singers, among others, find and reinforce common harmonics in group singing. To the best of my knowledge, Georgians never talk about this as an explicit process the way the Sardinian singers do, but the sonographic evidence indicates that they hear and feel these harmonic meetings.

One consequence of this complementarity is that the sound of a group of Georgians singing together is particularly rich in harmonics and sounds “dense”. Even the unisons at the end of Georgian songs sound more varied and less “pure” because of the differing head vibration strategies of the three voice parts and the different harmonics generated while singing the same note.

Non-Georgians learning songs at a group workshop face a particular difficulty: People who have experience singing in classical-style choruses are trained to pay attention to the group sound within their particular section, e.g., altos who are singing the same part should make an effort to “blend”. But this is a notion that does not really exist in Georgian folk singing. Traditionally, only one person sings the top part and only one person sings the middle part. These people do not have to “blend” with anyone. Even basses, who do sing the same part together, do not really sing in exactly the same way, you need only ask them to sing one-by-one to realize this. But the fact that they all have a common type of head vibration is sufficient to give them a sound which seems very uniform when they sing together, and allows a middle or top part to sing with them as easily as if they were singing with one person. In a workshop learning situation however, there are usually several people singing the top part and several people singing the middle part at the same time. My solution is to invite people to make less effort trying to blend in their section and to focus more on the connection with the basses. And of course, singing in trios provides an excellent opportunity for learners to practice complementarity.

2) By “body vibration”, I mean here vibration in all parts of the body *other than* the head, which is covered above by what I refer to as complementarity. This has been a subject of interest and study for me for quite some time now⁸. Through my work with Georgian singers, and particularly with the opportunity to touch them when they were singing, I noticed that their bodies were vibrating more than the bodies of non-Georgians singers with whom I was working, including myself. After doing tests with many Georgian and non-Georgians singers, I came to the conclusion that as a general rule, Georgians have more intense body vibration when they sing. This is almost certainly an element that was learned and transmitted unconsciously in traditional learning situations, without it being identified as a discrete element. I have never heard Georgians talk about body vibration, but in experiments where I increased my body vibration, using the techniques I have developed, my Georgian teachers said that I was coming closer to the sound that they thought was good for Georgian singing.

In the same way as for vibration in the head, I have developed exercises involving manual stimulation

⁷ Castellengo, M., A new approach to analyzing the musical scales of traditional vocal polyphony, 10th International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony, Tbilisi, Georgia.

⁸ Scherbaum, F., Loos, W., Kane, F., & Vollmer, D. (2015). Body vibrations as source of information for the analysis of polyphonic vocal music. In *Proceedings of the 5th International Workshop on Folk Music Analysis, June 10–12, 2015, University Pierre and Marie Curie, Paris, France* (Vol. 5, pp. 89–93), and also Kane, F., & Scherbaum, F. (2016). Using body vibrations for teaching, visualization and analysis of traditional Georgian singing. 8th International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony, 26–30 Sept, 11 pp.

of various parts of the torso, moving the body in particular ways, or using different positions which result in a different relationship with gravity. Many of my exercises are inspired by my experiences studying the Alexander Technique and the Feldenkrais Method, both of which are well-known techniques for enhancing body awareness. I have also adapted or developed exercises drawing on knowledge of the role of the vagus nerve and more generally the autonomic nervous system and finding ways to stimulate them⁹.

3) Particular notions of how the voices meet and connect, particular attitudes of awareness towards the other singers and other voice parts involved

All singers of all forms of polyphonic music aim to realize the harmonic framework of their songs based on their particular essential and esthetic criteria. In oral tradition singing, the exact execution of a polyphonic piece is not totally predictable in the way it would be if singers were working from a written score. The knowledge of oral tradition singers thus embodies a range of melodic and harmonic potentials that are considered allowable for the execution of a given piece of their repertoire. These elements fully apply to Georgian oral tradition singing, but beyond this, there are elements of communication and connection between singers which are not easy to identify or define, but which appear to be essential.

In July 2017, I had the opportunity to lead a short workshop with Vakhtang Pilpani and five other members of the Riho Ensemble in Germany. As a demonstration, I asked the Riho members to sing a song and then invited the workshop participants to describe the sound in a few words. Most of the comments evoked the intensity and strength of the singing, which the participants found surprising from a relatively small group of people. I then asked individual Riho singers to sing their parts. The participants were surprised to find that the individual voices were not especially loud. But when two singers sang together, the intensity seemed to be multiplied not by two, but by four, or more. The strength of the ensemble that so impressed the participants was not simply due to the arithmetic addition of the sounds: it came from something else.

To describe this phenomenon, I have invented the term *vibrational sharing* to reflect my hypothesis that the Georgian singers, beyond singing in tune with their fellow singers, include an awareness of their body vibration in their own singing, producing an effect that seems more profound, more intense, and richer. When I have tried to describe this phenomenon to Georgian village singers, they invariably say that what I am hearing is the result of the love and friendship between them which comes through in the singing. I have no doubt that they are right about this, and I can see that they feel no need to follow me in the technical analysis that I am attempting! While no Georgian has ever mentioned this idea to me, I find it very useful in teaching to suggest that as the basses sing, they imagine “taking” the vibration of the middle part – not just hearing it, but inviting it into their bodies so that it becomes part of their own sound. In the same way, I suggest that the person or people singing the top part do this with the bass. In this model, the bass is in the center, or the pivot, taking from the middle part and making the vibration available for the top part to take. The non-Georgian learner singing bass can experiment with attitudes and adjustment to connect with each of the upper parts. This experimentation is of course easier in a

⁹ See for example: Rosenberg, S., (2018) *Accessing the Healing Power of the Vagus Nerve*, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, CA, United States.

trio situation, but can be put into practice with several basses singing together. Non-Georgian listeners are often amazed that they can clearly hear the soloists singing with ten, twenty or fifty basses who are singing forte, and imagine that the soloists are singing with immense power (my first hypothesis in 1984). Today I would say that it is their unconscious complementarity and their ability to tap into the energy of the basses (proposing a model that the basses follow, for the middle part, “taking” the vibration, for the top part) which allows the soloists to be clearly heard with no extreme effort.

Both in concert settings and informal situations, Georgians use very few gestures that indicate efforts to coordinate during singing (for example, a choir conductor directing with hand or body movements). And yet, for listeners and observers, they seem to be extremely “connected”: rhythmically together and apparently fully sharing a common way of singing. I refer to this as singing in *awareness* or *consciousness* rather than singing with *coordination*. On one recent occasion, standing at the back of a Georgian church during a service, I listened to the chanting and had the impression that that choir members were very much vibrationally sharing in singing. Moving closer to be able to see them, I noticed that none of them were really looking at each other and quite a few of them were sending text messages on their smartphones! The question of exactly *how* Georgian singers are aware of each other in singing remains somewhat mysterious for me and I am developing more exercises to explore this.

As with the other elements mentioned above, I have attempted to find exercises to develop this capacity for vibrational sharing within myself and with other non-Georgian singers. The reaction of Georgian singers serves as a confirmation. If they feel that our group singing is significantly better and more Georgian-sounding and – feeling when we include these elements, then I consider that these are essential elements for them. My exercises to achieve this can involve movement, touching, visualization, and other modalities. A full description of them would go beyond the scope of this paper and probably wouldn't be adequate without a practical demonstration.

4) Ease/Little apparent effort

Ease and low effort can be considered desirable for almost any form of singing, even in cases where there are considerable technical challenges, like the Queen of the Night's Aria from the Magic Flute, which Mozart wrote with a particularly talented soprano in mind!

People who see a Georgian ensemble performing in concert for the first time are often struck by the absence of movement of the singers: their abdomens, shoulders, and heads barely seem to move. They open their mouths very little when they sing, and it is sometimes difficult to identify the soloists, as their movements do not differ from those of the basses. The same is generally true in less formal situations such as *supras*. Foreign observers are sometimes surprised that Georgians will start singing very suddenly in such situations, with no attempt to change positions (for example, they do not usually come closer together or stand up) before starting to sing, nor to discuss who will sing which part.

In the work that I have done with Georgian singers, I often asked them if I could touch their shoulders, necks or abdomens to see if there really is as little movement as it appears. I can say that, as a generalization, this is true: Georgians folk singers are very physically stable and economical singers. They use relatively little energy to produce a sound that seems impressively big. One may wonder: are Georgians and Georgian singer's immune from the muscular tensions, knots, and other phenomena

that are so common to people around the world? From my work with them, I would definitely say no: Georgian singers experience these phenomena as much as any other people, with the predictable variations depending on people's lifestyles (rural, urban, active, or sedentary), but this does not prevent them from singing well and with ease.

Beyond the obvious advantages for anyone, I believe that the ease in singing which I observe among Georgian singers enhances the other elements which I describe as being essential. For example, the lack of mouth movement makes the Georgian singers' head vibrations more stable, allowing them to better define the zones of complementarity (jaw/lower face, eyes, or upper cranium). This stability of vibration in the head makes it easier to feel and enhance or increase the vibration in the torso. This ease and stability of vibration in the head and the torso also makes it easier for the Georgian singers to feel each other's vibration and to share their vibrations, whereas excessive movement of the jaw makes this more difficult, because it changes the vibration in the face and the harmonics produced more substantially.

Drawing largely on the Alexander Technique which I studied over the course of many years, I have developed exercises to help pupils inhibit and reduce unconscious or reflex muscular movements and gestures which interfere with the stability of their sound. These exercises again involve touch, movement, and stimulation of the autonomic nervous system for the purpose of gaining greater economy and ease in singing.

Case Study: Hamlet Gonashvili

The life and experiences of Georgian Singer Hamlet Gonashvili illustrate some of the notions presented in this article. Hamlet was a very famous Georgian singer born in 1928 in the province of Kakheti. He died in an unfortunate accident in 1985 at the age of 57. Hamlet was greatly admired throughout Georgia for his interpretations of Kakhetian folk songs and also 20th century compositions such as "Daigvianes" in which Hamlet uses the ornamental style of Kakhetian folk singing. One of the songs he is most famous for today both in Georgia and beyond is Tsintsqaro (http://www.alazani.ge/base/rustavi/HAMLET/Rustavi_-_winwyaro.mp3), partly because the song was used in several professional productions (Kate Bush – Hounds of Love, Werner Herzog – Nosferatu, Michael Mann – Miami Vice). Hamlet's version of Tsintsqaro seems to be the reference that most Georgian and non-Georgian singers follow when they sing the song today. In 1953 Hamlet Gonashvili joined the Georgian State Song and Dance Ensemble based in Tbilisi and quickly became a featured soloist for Kakhetian songs especially, but for other songs as well.

In personal conversations I had with him in 1997, the well-known Georgian singer Otar Berdzenishvili (1928–2015) told me that Hamlet was particularly attracted to folk songs from the province of Guria and wanted to learn and sing them. After a little coaxing, Otar and his father, Vladimer Berdzenishvili (1885–1977), a Gurian himself and renowned specialist of the Gurian repertoire, agreed to work with Hamlet to teach him some Gurian songs and then to sing and record them together. The recording that I find most interesting is one of a Gurian Alilo sung by Hamlet Gonashvili, Vladimer and Otar Berdzenishvili (recorded in 1968?, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0AubLHZgX0>). Hamlet sings the solo at the beginning of the song and then the top part. It is interesting to compare this recording with another one made earlier: http://www.alazani.ge/base/Berdzenishvilebi/Berdzenishvilebi_-_Alilo.mp3.

Vladimer and Otar Berdzenishvili are again singing on this recording, but with another Gurian singer (Garsevan Sikharulidze) singing the top part.

If we take the recording of the three Gurian singers as a reference, it seems clear to me that Vladimer and Otar Berdzenishvili adjust their way of singing to fit the voice of Hamlet Gonashvili. This is of course what any good Georgian or other ensemble singer should do. A solo starts the song, and the other singers accept this as a proposal, like a suggestion that might come up in improvisational theater. For the theater improvisation to continue, the other actors must say “yes”, they must accept the proposal to continue the development. By analogy, the Berdzenishvilis accept Hamlet’s proposal. In their singing with Hamlet, the Berdzenishvilis demonstrate the principles of Georgian singing that I mentioned: they sing with complementarity, they have plenty of surface vibration and ease, and, most importantly, they have the awareness of Hamlet’s way of singing which allows them to find the overlap, the vibrational sharing, which for me expresses the deepest essence of Georgian singing. It seems to me that Vladimer Berdzenishvili in particular sings in a mellower way that usual for him and more than on the earlier Alilo recording in order to find a sound which will better enhance that of Hamlet and avoid covering him. In doing so, he plays what I consider to be the role of the bass in Georgian singing (see above), allowing the upper voices to connect. It seems to me that Otar also alters his sound in a similar way. But what they do is much more than just a mere change of timbre or intensity. Although they are clearly the authorities on how to sing Gurian song, they open themselves to Hamlet’s way of being and singing and let this affect what is happening in their bodies as they sing. This alters their singing in ways that are almost certainly not technical calculations, but rather a willingness to accept the vibration of the other with everything that it has to offer. This is something that Georgian singers always do, but it is rare to have two recordings that allow for this sort of comparison and to understand, to some extent, what is going on.

As I think about it today, I am not surprised that the Guruli Alilo recording of the two Berdzenishvilis and Hamlet Gonashvili made a huge impression on me when I first heard it in October 1982 and was one of the songs that made me want to learn to sing Georgian songs myself. It reflects Hamlet Gonashvili’s desire for a form of Georgian singing that particularly attracted him by its beauty and the Berdzenishvilis’ generosity, flexibility and capacity for “vibrational welcome”.

I was fortunate enough to meet Hamlet Gonashvili in June 1984 in Tbilisi, but in those days my Georgian language skills allowed me to say “gamarjobat” to him, but not much more. If Hamlet were alive today, I would ask him how he felt singing with Otar and Vladimer Berdzenishvili, if this experience brought the sort of satisfaction he desired, according to Otar, and if he was aware of how the two Gurians singers modified their way of being to welcome him.

Next steps

One of the main challenges in the early days of my study of Georgian singing was the lack of teachers who could provide explanations or at least serve as models although, as of 1990, access to them – the possibility to meet and work with Georgian singers – became easier. With the knowledge that I gained in this study, I realized that the conscious changes that I made to include these essential elements in singing Georgian songs also helped me, and my pupils, to sing songs of other repertoires with greater ease,

enjoyment, and satisfaction. This is the core of my work today: I lead workshops at which I teach a few Georgian songs which serve as an extremely relevant laboratory for voice exploration and for learning exercises and general approaches to help learners gain practical know-how in developing vibration in their heads and bodies, feeling connection with other people through awareness of vibration, and achieving greater ease in singing by inhibiting unnecessary, counter-productive, and tiring muscular movements, capacities which they can then bring to any form of individual or group singing.

Non-Georgian singers are attracted to the beauty of Georgian folk songs and they want to experience ease, strength and deep human connection in singing. I am grateful to all of my Georgian teachers who helped me to find this in Georgian singing and will continue to do my best to share it with others.

In a phase of my work to begin in the near future, I would like to present my way of analyzing what I consider to be essential elements of Georgian vocal production and my exercises and techniques for developing and enhancing them to Georgian singers and ensembles themselves. My purpose would not be to help them sing better – I think that they are doing well on their own – but rather to give them the tools to do their own analyses and to confirm for themselves whether the elements that I am proposing are indeed relevant and essential or not. It may allow them to develop a vocabulary which has been lacking to describe essential features that exist in Georgian singing.

Beyond this, looking ahead to a day when oral tradition village ensembles may have disappeared and with them the privileged models for learning, teachers of Georgian singing would have a more precise vocabulary to talk about the essential elements of their singing and thereby help their pupils to learn these elements and be able to transmit them themselves.

If Georgian singers and teachers find these ideas useful, I am sure that they will perfect and enrich the approach that I am presenting here which can, I hope, play a role in the continuity of Georgian singing as a practical, living tradition.

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GEORGIAN POLYPHONY FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

In recent years, more and more foreigners have become interested in learning to sing traditional music from around the world, and Georgian polyphonic folk songs and chants are now studied and sung by people worldwide, many of whom have no connection to Georgia other than their interest in the music. The history of this interest goes back to the 1960s when some American student choirs met some Georgian singers and heard them perform.

In late 1966, the United States selected three choirs to travel to the Soviet Union as part of a cultural exchange program. First, the Robert Shaw Chorale went, followed by the Oberlin Chorus, and finally, the New England Conservatory (NEC) Chorus, which was conducted by Lorna Cooke deVaron at the time. The NEC Chorus toured the Soviet Union for five weeks, traveling throughout the northern cities, and then to Yerevan and Baku, and a short visit to Tbilisi in December of 1966. Mrs. deVaron described their visit to the Tbilisi Conservatoire as “incredible”, with a concert by a fantastic, small ensemble of young men (this could have been Gordela) that “... had all 56 of our college-age singers on their feet clapping and cheering for almost a half an hour”. After the concert, Mrs. deVaron was presented with a gift of a newly published volume of Georgian folk song transcriptions with texts in Georgian and Russian script. When she returned to the United States, Mrs. deVaron decided to copy eight songs from the book for a special group from her NEC Choir. They later performed and recorded these songs.¹

In 1968, the Yale Russian Chorus from Yale University in Connecticut, USA, had a chance encounter with the Georgian State Ensemble of Song and Dance (directed by Anzor Kavsadze). This was at a hotel in Budapest, Hungary. The two groups sang for each other, and the director of the Yale group, Bruce Lieberman, was so taken with “Shen Khar Venakhi” that he asked Mr. Kavsadze if he could possibly provide a score. Mr. Kavsadze actually taught the song to the enthusiastic American singers during their brief time together and also transcribed the hymn by hand as a gift for Mr. Lieberman before they parted ways. As one singer recalls: “Retiring to a local restaurant, both groups ate, drank, and sang together until the early hours of the morning. Their conductor taught two pieces to the Americans: “Morbis Aragvi” and “Shen Khar Venakhi”. Years later, the singers would mark that night as the beginning of a longstanding cultural exchange between Georgians and North Americans that continues to this day.”² Thus began the introduction of Georgian polyphony into the repertoire of the Yale Russian Chorus. By the 1980s the Yale Russian Chorus had learned a number of Georgian songs, and in 1985, Frank Kane, who had been a student singer in the Yale Russian Chorus, decided to create a new group in the United States devoted

¹ Email correspondence with Lorna Cooke deVaron, November 30, 2015. Much of what is described concerning Kakhétian ornamentation comes from the author’s personal experience studying with Levan Abashidze

² Email correspondence with Mark Hewitt, former singer in the Yale Russian Chorus and historian for the group, November 29, 2022.

exclusively to traditional Georgian polyphonic song. This became The Kartuli Ensemble, which was the first such group outside of Georgia to study and perform Georgian polyphonic singing exclusively.

Over the years, more and more such groups have appeared, and many other foreign choirs have learned some Georgian songs, even if it is not their primary focus. Today there are Georgian singing groups in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Germany, Austria, Norway, Turkey, Slovenia, Australia, and elsewhere. How have these groups managed to learn? And perhaps the bigger question: why do they do this? I think the answer to this last question comes best from Lorna Cooke deVaron, who commented, "... naturally the students loved singing – almost yelling sometimes – this amazing music..."³ In the early days, contact was difficult, and resources were few. Some people had published scores, while others had to listen to recordings and do their best to transcribe what they heard, often only guessing what the words might be. Early recordings of foreigners singing Georgian polyphony reveal the difficulty of trying to learn without any informed teacher or coach. These days there are many more resources accessible. The internet has made it relatively simple to connect with Georgians who can help with notation, texts, pronunciation, etc. Many Georgian song teachers now offer online classes where they teach traditional songs to interested foreigners. Some Georgians travel abroad and teach. Others are engaged in teaching for study tours, where groups of foreigners congregate for short periods of intensive study in Georgia or elsewhere. Opportunities are abundant for students. Let us now explore some suggested methods for those who may be teaching Georgian songs to these interested foreign singers.

There are multiple factors to address when teaching Georgian songs to foreigners. Before getting started with any singers, it is important to be sure that they can match the pitch. The teacher should begin by singing a short phrase from a song that they intend to teach, but without using any real words (singing "la-la-la" or something similar). This phrase should be repeated several times by the student and the teacher together in unison until the student is comfortable singing it. The student should then be asked to sing it without the teacher's help. Once the student has done this and feels comfortable singing the phrase on their own, the teacher should try singing another voice part while the student sings the phrase they have just learned. It's not essential that the student be able to hold their own, but it is very helpful. Some people are not able (or not ready) to sing something by themselves while someone else sings a different voice part, but as long as they can match pitch, they will be able to get started. However, if the student can hold their part against a different voice, it is ideal. This entire "audition" process should typically take five to ten minutes, depending on the singer.

Once it is determined that the student can match pitch, and preferably hold their own voice part against another, they can begin learning how to make Georgian sounds. Obviously, the musical aspect is vital, but all traditional song is really just an extension of speech, and in this case, that speech is in Georgian. A foreign student encountering the Georgian language for the first time may be intimidated, but they must be told not to worry. Often students imagine that Georgian consonants are a big obstacle. However, while consonant sounds certainly need to be addressed, vowels are actually the key. Developing a clear understanding of how to make Georgian vowels will make everything sound more natural

³ Email correspondence with Lorna Cooke deVaron, November 30, 2015. Much of what is described concerning Kakhnetian ornamentation comes from the author's personal experience studying with Levan Abashidze

and correct. English, especially, has so many different vowel sounds, and those sounds can change depending on what other sounds or letters surround them. Just the simple English word “hi”, for example, is perceived by Georgian speakers as having two syllables, though native English speakers hear it as one: “ha”, with a swift slide into “i”, ending in a diphthong. And yet, if we place a consonant on the end of “hi”, we have “hit”, which uses a completely different vowel sound. For this reason, when we transliterate Georgian into Latin characters and spell out Georgian words, it is important to stress that the vowel sounds in Georgian never change. The “i” in “shin” will be the same vowel sound as in “vin”, “is”, or “didi”. Georgian vowels are non-sympathetic. This means that we can always tell how many syllables there are in a Georgian word by counting the vowels. If we add “Georgian schwas” into the mix, then simply add one syllable per schwa. Foreign students may run into problems when seeing consecutive vowels in Georgian because they think that two vowels together will create something different. This never happens. In Georgian, two vowels together are always exactly that: each vowel has its own syllable and there is no transitional sound between them. All vowels are changed by altering the tongue position inside the mouth. Vowels are not significantly shaped by the lips or jaw, as in English; there is some slight movement, but almost everything happens with the tongue.

There are six consistent vowel sounds in Georgian. They always remain pure, largely unshaped by the lips, and they never have diphthongs. The five basic vowels in the Georgian language (a, e, i, o, u) provide us with the main vowel sounds. These can be likened to Italian vowels, though they are somewhat less forward. The sixth Georgian vowel sound is the key to pronouncing long clusters of consonants, and it also gives any Georgian phrase more Georgian “flavor”. This vowel may be called the “Georgian schwa”. Although not a true schwa, it is very close. Depending on where the native English speaker comes from, they may hear it as similar to the vowel sound in the word “book”. A native Georgian speaker who is trying to identify the Georgian schwa sound should simply try reciting the Georgian alphabet without using the proper names of the letters: *a*, *b(uh)*, *g(uh)*, *d(uh)*, etc. Once the student has an understanding of the Georgian schwa, we can see how it functions to help us pronounce such words as: “mravalzhmier”; adding one schwa between the “m” and “r”, and another between the “l” and the “zha...” gives us something like: “*m(uh)-ra...va-l(uh)-zha...mi-er*”. We may even place one last schwa on the final “r” if desired. In the author’s own system of transliteration, these Georgian schwas are indicated for students with italic “*uh*” after a consonant.

We will now analyze the primary vowel sounds in Georgian: the tongue position for “a” is at rest in its natural position in the center of the mouth. Any change in tongue position or spreading of the facial muscles will change the vowel and produce something different.

The position for “e” is the same as above, but the central part of the tongue bridges up high, close to the roof of the mouth. This change happens without any lip, jaw, or facial movement.

The “i” vowel is the logical progression. Again, there is no significant movement except from the tongue, which pushes higher and flattens out, the sides of the tongue now touching the bottom molars of the upper teeth.

Changing from “i” to “o”, the tongue pulls back and down, and the lips close slightly to shape the vowel.

Finally, “u” is made much like “o”, but the tongue moves upward inside the mouth, resting somewhere in the center of the space. The lips close a bit more to shape the “u”, but they should not be puckered.

As for Georgian consonants, they are really not that difficult once the student understands the Georgian schwa. Many of the consonant sounds are similar to those in English. The truly different ones can be explained: aspirant versus non-aspirant consonants may be demonstrated by simply speaking a phrase such as “chewy chocolate chips” first normally, and then while the student actually holds their breath (this sounds something like “ch’... ch’... k’t’... ch’p’s”). The student will learn that there are indeed sounds that can be made while holding their breath and that the air will resume with the next aspirant sound. Though perhaps not so polite, the “kh” sound (in some systems transliterated using “x”) can usually be explained as “getting ready to spit”. Many students may realize that they remember making this sound in their childhood. The “gh” sound is exactly the same as “kh” but voiced with the Georgian schwa. The “zh” sound is like the “s” in “vision”. The “dz” sound is like the ending consonant sound in “woods”. The one Georgian sound that truly is a bit tricky is “q”. This may be jokingly referred to as the “gag reflex” sound; students might be told (not seriously) to discover how to make this sound by sticking one of their fingers down their throat. In all seriousness, the sound is made in the back of the throat, where we swallow, and not with the tongue. The most common mistake is the supposition that “q” is some kind of “k” sound. However, all “k” sounds are made by pushing up the back of the tongue to block the air, building up some air for a brief moment inside the mouth, and releasing it with a burst. The “q” sound is made by opening and closing the back of the throat and does not engage the tongue as in the “k” sound. Students should also be told that a very convincing Georgian “q” sound can be made with a true glottal stop, depending on the word. The Georgian word “siqvaruli” is the perfect example: if we place a glottal stop where the “q” falls, we hear “si’_varuli”, which sounds very natural.

The Georgian language has 33 letters. Below is the full alphabet, including approximate equivalent sounds in American English:

1. Ⴑ : a : as in “far”
2. Ⴐ : b : as in “book”
3. Ⴑ : g : as in “good” *
4. Ⴐ : d : as in “dog” *
5. Ⴑ : e : as in “then”
6. Ⴑ : v : a bilabial (halfway between v and w – native English speakers should be told to make the sound “v” but without actually touching the upper teeth to the lower lip. It should not be shaped by the lips as “w” typically is in English.
7. Ⴐ : z : as in “zero”
8. Ⴑ : t : as in “tea”
9. Ⴐ : i : as in “piece”
10. Ⴑ : k’ : as c in “scrape”
11. Ⴐ : l : as in “look” *

12. მ : m : as in “man”
13. ნ : n : as in “no”
14. ო : o : as in “go”
15. პ : p’ : as in “spring”
16. ჟ : zh : as the “s” in “vision”
17. რ : r : rolled or flipped – very often a touch of the tongue, as in Italian.
18. ს : s : as in “see”
19. ტ : t’ : as in “straw”
20. უ : u : as in “blue”
21. ფ : p : with more air – this is what Georgians use in place of “f,” and it has more air than typical words with “p” in English.
22. კ : k : as in “key”
23. ლ : gh : similar to the French “r”, this is the voiced equivalent of “kh” (below)
24. ჟ : q : made by closing and opening the back of the throat. This is often pronounced very softly, and is closer to the Cockney glottal (“glo’al”) than to any form of “k”
25. შ : sh : as in “shoe”
26. ჩ : ch : as in “chair”
27. ც : ts : as in “its”
28. ძ : dz : as “ds” in “woods”
29. წ : ts’ : non-aspirant equivalent of “ts”
30. ჭ : ch’ : non-aspirant equivalent of “ch”
31. ბ : kh : similar to the Cyrillic “x”, akin to throat-clearing, made by pushing the back of the tongue up high to make a narrow passage of air. An alteration of the “h” sound.
32. ჯ : j : as in “jam”
33. ჰ : h : as in “hello”

* The g, b, and l, especially, are quite heavy and forward, and might be described as “Brooklyn”. If the student has ever heard people from Brooklyn, New York, saying words that start with these letters, they may have some idea.

Knowing all this, it should be remembered that not everyone speaks or sings the same way. Different Georgians and different regional inflections create variations within these vowels – but the basic sounds described here should be useful for establishing standard Georgian vowel pronunciation. Also, as singers often drop the jaw, especially when going to higher notes, there may be some jaw movement between any two vowels. This is not wrong, but especially as foreign students have many habits from their own languages that may sneak in and color their vowels the wrong way, it is helpful to keep jaw motion minimal. One technique that can help break students of bad vowel habits (like diphthongs) is to have them omit all consonant sounds from the text, and speak or sing only the vowels in succession, making sure to keep only pure vowels with no diphthongs between them or on the ending vowels. The student should do this a few times for any given line, and then try again with the consonants added back in. This will help keep the vowels pure.

Once the student has achieved a basic understanding of Georgian pronunciation, they will be ready to begin learning a song. First and foremost, it is very important that all teaching be done orally, whenever possible, with the student first listening (perhaps several times) and then repeating. Printed word sheets with complete texts and vocables in transliteration are most helpful in this process. Such word sheets should have a generous amount of space around the words and between the lines, so that the student can mark the paper with a pencil, using whatever neumes, notes, or remarks may be of best use to them. There are several reasons why the oral method is far superior to standard Western musical notation: to begin with, it is in line with the Georgian tradition; almost all singers in Georgia learn their traditional folk songs orally, even if they are Conservatory trained. Second, it equalizes the “playing field” for all singers, giving courage to anyone who may feel unequipped as a singer because they are unable to read sheet music. Third, it allows students in the context of a group to hear and allow the song to come together as they perceive it; intervals and harmonies that are non-Western may shift slightly in one direction or another, but with careful guidance from the teacher, the singers will find their way to creating powerful Georgian sounds. Finally, students who learn songs orally – even in a language that they don’t speak – are much more likely to remember those songs days, weeks, months, or even years later. The power of rote memorization from listening and repeating is truly remarkable, whereas a skilled sight reader might read through a score very well, but have almost no memory of what they sang if asked to repeat it later without that score in hand.

For a newcomer to Georgian polyphony, learning a song is best achieved with at least one other singer, as well as the teacher, so that we can put all three voices together (assuming that the song is in three voice parts, like most Georgian folk songs and chants). Songs come in different levels of difficulty, so a good choice for a first song should be something relatively simple, with a short verse followed by a simple refrain, and with several verses. The teacher should begin by speaking the words, whatever they may be, for just the first verse or phrase that the student is starting with. This will establish basic pronunciation. It is not necessary to review all of the text or verses at the start. In fact, this can sometimes make it more intimidating for the student. Short phrases are best, and they can be gradually assembled as the student becomes more comfortable. Repetition is key, and it is important for the teacher not to speak or sing any phrases too quickly. Students should be allowed to learn at their own pace, and this may be different for each student. As the student repeats the short individual phrases, they will begin to feel more confident. It generally helps if multiple students are learning and singing the same voice part (several students learning the middle voice, for example). Once a full verse and refrain have been learned for one voice part, the teacher should begin teaching a different voice part to another student (or students). In most cases, it is best to begin by teaching with the voice part that opens the song. If all three voices begin together, then starting with bass is usually best. If the opening voice is middle or top, then the bass should be taught second.

For example, when teaching a song like “Lashkrad Tsasvla”:

[see link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDtJIDNs4i8>]

We should begin by teaching the bass part to verse one only, along with the refrain. This is short enough and quite simple so it should come together quickly. Once the basses feel confident on their part,

we should switch to teaching the middle voice. We should continue working with the middle voice singers until they also feel confident. Then we should go back to the basses and review their part once more. Assuming everyone feels ready, we can put the two parts together. At any point during this process, it is also a good idea to thank the top voice singers for their patience and assure them that they will be singing soon. Once we have the two lower voice parts singing together, we can begin teaching the top voice singers their part. When the top voice singers feel confident, depending on the experience or comfort level of the singers, we may decide simply to add the top voice to the lower parts and sing all three parts together, or we may choose to hear the top voice with just the bass, or with just the middle. It is always a good idea to teach and practice in two-voiced configurations, as well as with all three parts. Once we have all three voice parts comfortably singing the first verse, we can move on to the subsequent verses.

Of course, simply learning the mechanics of a song is one thing; there must also be some substance along with it. Students should be told what the song is about, and they should be given information about its source. Word for word translations are often helpful. All students who are serious about learning Georgian folk songs should also be learning the meaning of individual words that they encounter. This is easier for students who learn over a longer span of time. Ultimately, if they become deeply interested, students may decide to study the Georgian language. They may also travel to Georgia to experience the culture and ascribe more personal meaning to their understanding, thus enriching their performance. This should be highly encouraged. Nothing else can deliver quite the same degree of excitement to a student of Georgian polyphonic singing. It is also important that the sources of each individual song and variant be preserved and credited whenever appropriate. Songs learned from (or inspired by) specific recordings should be stated as such, as should songs learned directly from Georgian teachers and song masters.

Foreign students of Georgian singing may ask how to produce the “Georgian sound”. Much of it has to do with the way the vowels are made, as described above. The vocal placement should be thought of as a column of sound shooting straight up from the back of the soft palate and out through the top of the head. The focus should be aimed upwards and with just a touch of nasal quality. Some Georgians sing very nasally, though foreign students may not benefit from emulating this, as it may not feel natural to them, and could lead them to believe that a “special” voice is needed. In fact, the voice should simply sound like a Georgian “version” of the student’s own voice, born from their newly learned Georgian vowel sounds. The vocal production may be intensified by keeping a strong column of air supported by the diaphragm while letting out a small stream of sound. Keeping the air pressure from the diaphragm strong without letting out too much air can help create intense ringing harmonics. It can be thought of like a balloon that is being pinched to make it “sing”; pinched tighter, the sound becomes higher and more intense, while loosening the pinch causes the air to spill out as the sound dissipates. While Georgians do not consciously manipulate harmonics, they do create stunning overtones simply using their natural sound. Listening to Georgians singing in the “authentic” manner of having only one voice on each of the upper two parts, supported by a large number of basses (ten or twelve) can be very informative. No matter how loud the basses are, the individual upper voices can always be heard clearly. Often those upper voices are not particularly loud, but they cut right through the bed of bass because of their timbral intensity.

Some students become interested in the unique vocal forms and techniques found in Georgian po-

lyphony, and these can also be taught with proper knowledge and technical explanation. *Krimanchuli* is one such technique. Yodeling is a vocal phenomenon that is found throughout the world. The simple vocal “break” is the primary stepping stone. The teacher should begin by simply explaining to the student how the human voice may naturally break when slipping between vocal registers. This may be demonstrated by sliding up and down a range of pitches that span two vocal registers, keeping the volume medium to loud, and breath support rather strong. The vocal break (which may also be called a “snap”) should be discovered fairly quickly. Once the student has identified and performed the break, the teacher may demonstrate the primary intervals of *krimanchuli*: the “home” pitch, and the fifth above. These pitches are sung on “iri” or “uru” (for the high/fifth above pitch), and the simple vowel “a” for the “home” pitch. The student learning *krimanchuli* should be told that it is critical for the interval to be a clean fifth, and practicing slowly may help build consistency. It should be noted that, while all singers may be able to discover and develop this vocal break, not everyone will be able to perform it at the required pitch for Georgian songs. Unfortunately, singing *krimanchuli* is simply not for everyone.

Once the fifth interval has been achieved, with the proper voice break happening between “iri”/ “a”/ “uru”/ “a”, the common lower pitch may be added: the third below the “home” pitch. This should be sung on “o” or “ho”. Although this lower pitch is actually sung in the same vocal register as the “home” pitch, it should be attacked with an imposed vocal break after the “home” pitch. The teacher can demonstrate this (or the student may discover it) by singing a series of consecutive pitches, ascending or descending in the scale, and imposing a vocal break (or “snap”) between each interval, almost giving the effect of each successive note being yodeled, even though the “landing” notes are in a single register. This is a vital technique for anyone who wishes to perform *krimanchuli* successfully.

Krimanchuli effectively performs the function of a metronome, and precision of pitch, rhythm, and tempo are required. Students should understand the importance of *krimanchuli* and its most complex subdivisions of beats as the thread holding the crazy quilt fabric of middle and bass parts together. Partnered with *krimanchuli* is the *gamqivani* technique. This may casually be described as a “cartoon character voice”. It is made both very high and with a pinched, piercing, resonant, and edgy voice. For men, especially, there is often a temptation to sing this in falsetto, but this is neither correct nor sufficiently audible. Despite how high the pitch may be, it is still performed in a “full” or “real” voice. By this point, any student who has delved into *krimanchuli* and *gamqivani* should be given plenty of resource recordings for study, and be left to their own devices to continue practicing, with the teacher giving feedback and critique, as needed.

Another unique form that many foreign singers enjoy and wish to learn is Kakhetian ornamentation. This requires a much different methodology, as there is actually nothing unusual about the vocal production itself. While there are many things to learn about Kakhetian ornamentation, a few basic ideas and instructions are sufficient for a student to get started.

One of the most important concepts in approaching ornamentation of any kind – in music, dance, architecture, or any creative field – is to remember the basic function of ornaments: to make something more beautiful. Students often make the very easy mistake of being dazzled by the ornaments themselves and believing them to be the “important” thing. However, since ornamentation is making “something”

more beautiful, it's actually that "something" that must always remain the most important focus. Without something beautiful to begin with, no amount of ornamentation will really make it better. In Kakhetian singing, especially in *supruli* ("table") songs, which generally have no pulse or meter, the focus should be on long-held notes. The student should always be focused on moving from one beautiful, long-held note to the next. The basic and unornamented structure of the song should remain clear, and even without any ornamentation, be satisfying to hear.

The first ornament any student of Kakhetian style should learn is the basic turn (see Figure 1, below):



Basic Kakhetian ornamented turn

A new student should begin by practicing this until it becomes automatic. Georgian ornaments always descend (as above, taking us from pitch A one degree down to pitch B); ascending tones are never ornamented. If something sounds to the student like an ascending ornament, they should listen again – it is actually little descending ornaments that quickly jump back up by melodic steps, giving the impression that the ornaments are ascending. Starting on the first tone, the basic figure (above) will take the pitch down one degree in the scale. Stress should be placed on the long, held notes, and never on the ornaments themselves. Ascending tones may be marked with a slight glottal, accentuating the upward motion. While there is no glottal marking within the ornament itself, a mark may be placed just before the ornament begins, accentuating the end of the long, held tone. It is also crucially important that each individual note within the ornamented figure itself be clearly defined, equal in duration, and equal in weight or stress; if one note within the ornamented figure is longer in duration or heavier in stress, it will not sound Kakhetian.

The single-degree ornament described above is sufficient to get a student started. Later, they may begin learning how this basic ornamental figure may be broken down into smaller pieces and/or stacked to create ornaments that span two or more downward degrees of the scale, taking us from pitch A to C, by way of a momentary touch (within the ornament) on B. (See Figure 2, below):



Stacked Kakhnetian ornamented turn

Ornamentation is used almost exclusively on long-held vowels and rarely splits syllables within a word. This reflects another key aspect of Georgian ornamental singing: the text is extremely important. Table songs from Kartli-Kakheti are some of the most poetic in Georgian folklore, and the text is never random or vague. When singing one of these songs, it is essential to have a good translation, preferably word for word. The poetry must be carefully and clearly pronounced and delivered as though the singer is savoring each phrase. If the text is unclear, or if it seems rushed or careless, then the soul of the poetry is lost. Rhythm is an important element, as well, as most table songs are without any regular meter or pulse; being able to deliver a convincing text in spoken Georgian is the pathway to singing the phrase with the right feeling.

Protocol of ornaments is also important when singing in duets. The ornaments often move in a staggered parallel, moving gradually downward, alternating between intervals of thirds and seconds. If the two voices in an ornamented duet begin a third apart from each other, then the top voice should move first, ornamenting down one tone to create a dissonant second interval. At that moment, the lower voice may start its ornament down, bringing us back to the third, now with both voices one degree lower. Depending on the structure of the song, sometimes the top voice will have to wait for the lower voice to move first, and sometimes vice-versa. The intervals should remain at seconds and thirds most of the time, especially when singing long descending phrases that span several tones. If fourths or unisons come into the picture in the context of such staggered parallel movement, then one of the voices has moved too soon. Long-held notes should be stretched out perhaps longer than the singer (or listener) might expect. This makes the movement more satisfying when it finally arrives.⁴

As with *krimanchuli*, ornamentation requires much individual practice and patience. Students should be given as many different good recordings as possible for study purposes. Some students may become frustrated if they are unable to perform the ornament movements quickly enough; a song that should be four minutes long might end up being five or more minutes because the student is laboring to keep the ornaments consistent. It is important to encourage the student; to remind them of the importance of maintaining the correct melodic form of the ornament, and of keeping all movements within the orna-

⁴ Much of what is described concerning Kakhnetian ornamentation comes from the author's personal experience studying with Levan Abashidze

ment equal in duration and stress. Speed will come with time and practice. It is more important that the ornaments be sung correctly than for them to be sung quickly.

Georgian sacred chant is something quite different, but with many common characteristics to Georgian folk singing. Pronunciation obviously remains the same. However, as many sacred chants are “through-composed” or non-strophic, and often somewhat complex, Western notation (sheet music) is often helpful in teaching.

In the 20th century, Western classical forms became an increasingly powerful influence in Georgia, and many choirs performed sacred chant very quietly, often with extreme dynamic phrasing and incomprehensible texts. This is quite different from the earliest recordings of Georgian church hymns (performed by Gigo Erkomaishvili’s trio in 1909). Unfortunately, there are very few recordings of church hymns from that time until the late Soviet period. Some have survived, however, and it is largely thanks to these surviving recordings, and to some historical writings, that there has been a revival of Georgian-style church chant. The Anchiskhati Choir has been one of the main groups leading this revival. Their performance of church hymns is very “matter of fact”, with minimal dynamic fluctuation, very clear delivery of text, and a remarkably folk-sounding character. Keeping in mind that the church music in Georgia was designed to be sung and understood by everyone, not only by an elite or educated audience, this seems like a valid approach. The clarity of the text is especially convincing, for in the highly dynamic and polished “classical” style, the text is often so hushed or muddled that it may be impossible to understand the words. This would be an unfortunate choice for use in a common liturgy. In short, when performing sacred chant: keep tempos moving, keep texts clear, and try to preserve the integrity of each phrase as a distinct thought – not simply long, floating syllables weaving in and out. If a word is being stretched out over many notes, it should still be comprehensible as that word, and not lose its thread.

Sooner or later, all foreign students of Georgian polyphony will ask about scales and tuning. This is certainly not an easy topic, nor one that has any definitive guide or mode of study. The fact is, however, that traditional Georgian singing does not typically follow the rules of Western music, and often employs the use of microtuning. It is not wise to deflect or dismiss such curiosity; on the contrary, all students should be encouraged to listen to recordings of authentic performers and to discover for themselves how Georgian singing differs from the musical world that they know and understand. A basic explanation of some generally agreed-upon features is wise: for example, the slightly sharp fourth in the Georgian trichord; the general predominance of the fifth over the octave; the phenomenon of rising, whereas a cappella groups from Western traditions more commonly go flat. Even though foreign students may not be able to replicate such tuning (especially when there are multiple singers on each voice part), it is informative and valuable for them to know about it, and it may become something for them to strive for as they continue their studies.

One most valuable tools that should be mentioned, is that all foreign students of Georgian Polyphony can benefit from YouTube. So many recordings of Georgian polyphonic singing are available for free listening on this platform, and many of them are truly excellent performances. The student might even find multiple and quite differing performances of any given song. This is always deeply informative, as it can teach the student that there is no singular performance model that must always be adhered to. This again leads the student in the direction of “finding their voice”.

There is a Georgian saying: “As many languages as you speak, you are that many people”. The real key for any foreign student to understand and perform Georgian polyphonic songs convincingly is, perhaps paradoxically, to “be” Georgian. As previously stated, establishing a meaningful relationship with the culture will certainly help. Students should be told that they are not merely learning to make sound or music, but to “speak” a language. Here it may be worth mentioning that Georgians who are about to sing something will often use the word “*vtkvat*” (“let us say”) rather than “*vimgherot*” (“let us sing”). All singing is communication. Anyone learning to speak a new language must begin with the process of imitation and translation. Singing is no exception; the foreign student of Georgian singing must begin by imitating the sounds that they hear, and “translating” them into the context of the musical communication that they already understand. However, this process must evolve. As with spoken language, time brings quicker understanding, and eventually, fluency. Someone who has learned to speak another language fluently no longer imitates or translates anything; they have created a new “version” of themselves in that language, and they behave and think as that “new” person, in the context of the new language. Thus, the ultimate goal for any foreign student of Georgian polyphony should be to “find their inner Georgian”. They must eventually stop imitating and begin communicating with their own Georgian voices. It should also be stressed that the real goal in studying and singing Georgian polyphony should never be simply performance. Traditional Georgian songs and chants were created to support and enrich everyday life, and not to be placed on a stage in front of an audience. This does not mean that it should not be performed; on the contrary, performance is one of the great ways in which foreign singers can “give back” to Georgia, its people, and culture, by sharing it with other foreigners in concert. However, the concert performance should remain secondary to the experience shared among the singers. They should look to please each other before pleasing an audience at a concert.

In summary, Georgian polyphonic singing is a wonderfully rich art that, much like opera, belongs to the world. Foreign students will need patience and patient teachers. But those who commit the time and focus to learning will be rewarded with riches that cannot be obtained through any other means. In effect, they will create their own “village” of sorts, where traditions that have come down through generations may be preserved by their own unique voices and shared with people around the globe. Let us wish each of these singers, teachers, and yet-unknowing discoverers of Georgian polyphony “*mravalzhamier*” – “long life!” – and many years of learning and enjoying the endlessly fascinating world of Georgian song.

JOHN A. GRAHAM*Independent scholar*

TEACHING GEORGIAN TRADITIONAL CHANT TO INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES

Since the publication of the first modern collection of Georgian polyphonic chant notation in the year 1999, the international interest in this unique liturgical music system has steadily grown. Recordings by the acclaimed Anchiskhati Church choir and Rustavi State Folklore Ensemble helped to pique interest in the 1990s among the growing number of singers around the world already familiar with Georgia's rich folk singing traditions, while the new books of notation made the complex liturgical chants more accessible to aspiring performers. Orthodox Christian church choirs in the United States, Europe, Russia, and other countries also began incorporating Georgian chant melodies into their worship services, usually in translation into their own vernacular worship languages.

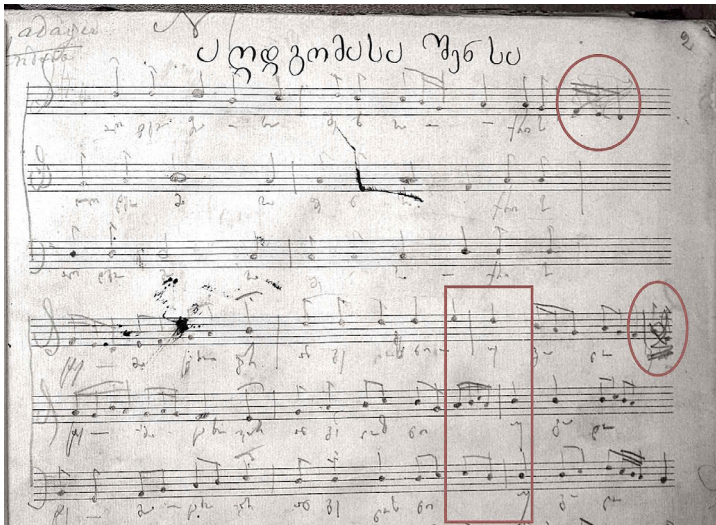
At the same time, a variety of theoretical and historical areas of scholarly study have emerged, including the comparison of Georgian hymnographic texts with those from Koine Greek, Syriac, or Hebrew, especially as some medieval texts preserved in the Georgian language reflect the earliest Christian liturgical rite of St. James. This scholarly interest has resulted in a growing number of conference presentations, comparative studies, and doctoral dissertations written in international languages. But the challenges to studying these subjects remain formidable, as a combination of lack of access to primary sources, the difficulty of the relevant languages, and other hurdles combine to limit the number of scholars able to pursue these important avenues of inquiry.

While the demand for folk music has resulted in a brisk trade in musical tourism, with international choirs regularly traveling to Georgia to study with traditional singers in their homes and the production of notated books and audio recordings, meeting the demand for singers interested in learning or studying liturgical music has lagged far behind. The publication of chant books has helped, but they are difficult to locate outside of Georgia, and were not published with international singers in mind but rather for Georgian church choirs. While international church singers would like to sing Georgian liturgical music, set to their vernacular languages, there are currently no available arrangements in other languages sanctioned by the Georgian Orthodox Church. Despite a lack of sources, there is increasing demand and interest from international singers to perform Georgian liturgical chant in both liturgical and secular concert contexts. This article focuses on various pedagogical approaches to teaching Georgian chant theory and practice, through a series of case studies based on the author's own experience as a student and teacher of Georgian chant.¹

¹ The author's experience includes directing amateur choirs at Wesleyan University in 2002–2003, Princeton University 2006–2013, Yale University 2015–2016, and numerous workshops for amateur and professional choirs in France, Finland, Italy, the United States, and elsewhere. The author completed a doctoral dissertation on the source manuscripts for Georgian chant at Princeton University in 2015 and has been a chanter in various parishes of the Georgian Orthodox Church from 2005 to the present.

Two of the first chants that Pilimon Koridze (1835–1911) transcribed in the Kutaisi project of 1885–1886 were the Paschal troparia, “Aghdgomasa shensa” [To Your Resurrection, Lord], and “Kriste aghdga” [Christ is Risen]. These triumphant, jubilant hymns are sung, fittingly, at the very beginning of the Paschal all-night vigil service which itself marks the beginning of the liturgical year.² Koridze notated these chants from several master singers of the oral tradition in the central Georgian region of Imereti, who did not know Western notation, and sang slightly different variants with every repetition as part of their normal performance practice. Koridze struggled to create a single notated record of a chant, given the constant variation and the non-tempered tuning system, so it is worth examining a rough draft to understand some of the nuances of the music as inherited through oral tradition, as much as can be gleaned from these first attempts at notation.

In the rough draft transcription of “Aghdgomasa shensa” (Example 1), we notice that each of the three voice parts is placed on a separate staff; the top two voice parts are written with treble clefs while the bottom voice part with a bass clef; the key signature is written only in the top voice, while the text is written under each voice part (a transcription in modern notation may be seen in Example 7). Deleted notes at the end of the staves, and hastily added mismatched bar lines indicate that this was a rough draft written hastily while the singers were performing (circled sections, Example 1).



“Aghdgomasa shensa”, rough draft, 1885 (NCM Q–667: 2)

² For the English translations and liturgical rubrics of these chants, as well as a description of the liturgical context of their performance in the Paschal service, see the *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic (Greco-Russian) Church*

There are some 20, 000 pages of transcriptions, some in rough draft copy like this one while others are the good copies, all produced during the decades between 1880–1920.³ The majority of the transcriptions reflect music from the chant school centered around Gelati Monastery in central Georgia (Example 2), but other schools of chant also survive in limited transcriptions. For example, in Guria, a region of southwest Georgia along the Black Sea coast, Dimitri Patarava asked his son to notate a number of chants that he had learned from his teachers at the Shemokmedi Monastery.

Gelati - sada

Agh-dgo - ma - sa shen - sa - kris - te ma - tskho - var

Agh-dgo - ma - sa shen - sa - kris - te ma - tskho - var

Agh-dgo - ma - sa shen - sa - kris - te ma - tskho - var

“Aghdgomasa”, Gelati monastery, simple style

While Patarava’s version of the chant “Aghdgomasa shensa” (Example 3) is similar overall to the musical variant notated by Koridze in the Imereti region, the ornamental inflections indicate an influence from the regional folk music of Guria, which are even more pronounced in the other chant transcriptions in the collection.

2 Shemokmedi - sada

Agh-dgo - ma - sa she - n - sa - kris - te ma - tskho - var

Agh-dgo - ma - sa she - n - sa - kris - te ma - tskho - var

Agh-dgo - ma - sa she - n - sa - kris - te ma - tskho - var

“Aghdgomasa”, Shemokmedi Monastery, simple style

A third school of chant is reflected in the manuscripts of the Karbelashvili brothers, whose ancestors studied at the Svetitskhoveli Monastery (Example 4). Again, the melody in the top voice of this variant is like the others, while the lower two voice parts vary.

With the Princeton Georgian choirs, I often started the first rehearsal of the year by singing through three or more musical variants of “Aghdgomasa shensa”. It is a simple, joyful chant, and by singing different musical versions, we tune our ears to what is consistent in Georgian chant, such as the arc of

³ For a thorough discussion of the history of the transcription of Georgian polyphonic chant into Western notation, see the PhD dissertation: Graham, *The Transcription and Transmission of Georgian Liturgical Chant* (Princeton University, 2015).

the top-voice melody, the cadence pitch, and the length of each phrase. We also learn the nuances of each voice part, and which elements may be ornamented, such as the cadential formulas.

3 Svetitskhoveli - gamshvenebuli

Agh-dgo - ma - sa - she - n sa - kris - te ma - tskho - var

Agh-dgo - ma - sa - she - n sa - kris - te ma - tskho - var

Agh-dgo - ma - sa - she - n sa - kris - te ma - tskho - var

“Aghdgomasa”, Svetitskhoveli Monastery, ornamental style

Theoretically speaking, the top voice holds a more important role in the transmission of chant and is classified as belonging to a particular tone in a particular genre (for example, the melody for “Aghdgomasa shensa” is classified as Tone 6, of the troparion genre). The lower two voices, meanwhile, vary between regional schools because they are not fixed in the transmission of the eight-tone system, and therefore subject to local variation and improvisation according to local musical taste and experience.

Despite the theoretical and pedagogical importance of the top voice, Georgian chant is always manifested as a three-voiced chant with all voice parts being equal. Scholar and choir director Malkhaz Erkvanidze preempts any inclination to reduce the inherited polyphonic tradition to a group of model melodies in an essay published in the introduction to *Kartuli Galoba* [Georgian Chant], the first of a series of published chant books officially endorsed by the Patriarchate of the Georgian Orthodox Church. After acknowledging the indispensable role of the melodic voice, he offers this cautionary instruction:

The Georgian upper voice – *tkma*, was not created independently and does not exist separate from the other two parts. The consideration of the function of the second and third voice parts is demonstrated in the limited range of the first and upper voice, which differs from the harmonized melodies of the West European and Russian traditions. The function of the upper voice cannot be discovered when it is sung independently of the other two voices, and the same can be said for any of the voices that are sung divorced of their three-part context.

According to Erkvanidze, the functionality of any individual voice part cannot be discerned through a reductive process of isolating one or the other voices from its inherent polyphonic structure. But the fact that the transmission of Georgian chant is predicated on a group of melodic phrases may indicate that Georgian polyphonic chant evolved from an earlier Christian chant tradition in the (monophonic) Byzantine sphere of musical influence.

Davit Shugliashvili, a musicologist at the Tbilisi Conservatoire whose dissertation thoroughly mapped the model melody system, has shown that the melodies assigned to individual text genres are not specific to a geographic region. Rather, they are common to each of the regional monastery schools. In one study, Shugliashvili compares the model melodies of Tone 4 troparia between each of the three

extant regional chant schools to show that, while harmonization in the lower voices varies considerably, the model melodies remain consistent.

To teach students the basics of ornamentation, we first must understand which notes may be ornamented, versus those notes that must remain present as building blocks of the core structure of the melody and harmony. Thankfully, we have many versions of the same chant to compare. In the manuscripts that record the received tradition of polyphonic chant, we find that there are many musical variants of the same text not just from the three major regional schools, but also different ornamental versions of chants within each school. Any individual chant could be sung in a simple manner, an ornamental manner, or in a highly ornamental manner. We start by analyzing the first phrase of “Aghdgomasa shensa”, just the top voice, looking at three stages of ornamental development.

Example A, Simple Mode

Agh-dgo - ma - sa shen - sa kris - te ma - tskho - var

Example B, Ornamental

Agh-dgo - ma - sa shen - sa kris - te ma - tskho - var

Example C, Ornamental with *gadajvaredineba*

Agh-dgo - ma - sa shen - sa kris - te ma - tskho - var

“Aghdgomasa shensa”, melodic ornamentation comparison

It is fairly straightforward for singers to learn to embellish medial and phrasal cadences such as those seen in the boxed sections of Example 5b. Each ornament bears the particular signature of a famous singer, in this case, the master singer Artem Erkomaishvili.⁴ In Example 5c the most radical form of ornamentation is illustrated: *gadajvaredineba*, or “to traverse the cross”. By looking at these three examples of the chant, all from the same monastery school in West Georgia, but ornamented in different degrees of complexity, certain features stand out. The length of the phrase remains the same. The starting and ending notes of the phrase remain the same. The basic contour of the melody remains the same, but the medial and final cadences of the phrase can be ornamented either with added passing tones as in Example 5b, or through a complex voice crossing as in Example 5c. To continue our lesson in ornamentation of this style, it is necessary to look at the polyphonic context.

⁴ The full transcription of this chant can be found in, Shugliashvili, ed., *Kartuli saek'lesio galoba, shemokmedis sk'ola...* (2006), 2. Other singers such as Erkomaishvili's teacher Anton Dumbadze used different formulaic ornaments in the same places, suggesting that each singer could adopt their own signature style.

Agh-dgo - ma - sa shen - sa - kris - te ma - tskho - var

Agh-dgo - ma - sa shen - sa - kris - te ma - tskho - var

Agh-dgo - ma - sa shen - sa - kris - te ma - tskho - var

“Aghdgomasa shensa”, Gelati simple style, first phrase

In the first phrase of the simple variant (Example 6), all three voice parts occupy a narrow range of just four to five notes; they also maintain the same harmonic rhythm and follow basic parallel harmony. But in the ornamental variant presented here (Example 7), the range is increased, passing tones may be added, and the basic parallel harmony is disguised with counter motion.

Agh-dgo - ma - sa shen - sa kris - te ma - tskho - var

Agh-dgo - ma - sa shen - sa kris - te ma - tskho - var

Agh-dgo - ma - sa shen - sa kris - te ma - tskho - var

“Aghdgomasa shensa”, Gelati ornamental style, first phrase

In the cadence, as the first voice initiates a voice-crossing by descending into the range typically occupied by the lower voices, the lower two voice parts must respond in specific ways. The middle voice employs a series of upper and lower neighbor notes to ornament its line *above* the first voice (Example 7), while the third voice part increases its lower range to create space (Examples 7 and 9). This is a semi-spontaneous ornamentation style that requires a great deal of skill from all the singers.

an - ge - loz - ni u - ga - lo - be - n tsa - ta shi - na

an - ge - loz - ni u - ga - lo - be - n tsa - ta shi - na

an - ge - loz - ni u - ga - lo - be - n tsa - ta shi - na

“Aghdgomasa shensa”, Gelati simple style, second phrase

But as voice crossings become more complex, the second voice is forced to improvise away from its own line. In the second phrase of “Aghdgomasa shensa”, for example, the lead voice not only descends into the range of the middle voice but physically takes over its line, singing the notes A–G–F on the syllable *-lo-* (boxed, Example 8; compare to first voice in Example 9). The middle-voice is forced to remain in a higher range and improvise for the second half of the phrase (boxed, Example 9).

“Aghdgomasa shensa”, Gelati ornamental style, second phrase

As the lead voice abandons the model melody, instead descending into the fabric of the polyphonic sound tapestry, its melodic function ceases. The model melody because an abstract concept that is referenced but is not actually voiced at this moment of the performance. The loss of the audible model melody might lead one to expect a certain degree of compensatory stability from the harmonic relationships of the other voice parts, or even for the middle-voice singer to take over the performance of the melody. But this doesn’t happen.

Study of the various source manuscripts and recordings show that in instances of ornamental voice crossing, the middle voice decidedly does not sing the melody, but rather improvises on other pitch classes. It is unclear if there is a theoretical basis for this phenomenon. One explanation may be that the singer initially assigned to sing the model melody retains that function throughout the performance of the chant to the exclusion of any other singer. Even if the *mtkveli* (“one who speaks”, or lead singer) chooses not to voice the model melody by taking a decision to initiate a voice crossing, the referent melody is still implied in their performance and the structure of the chant phrase remains intact as long as other important parameters are strictly observed. Just as a jazz standard relies on several key melodic features and a chord progression upon which every performer may improvise, Georgian chant contains an immutable structure, upon which improvisation and variation may be added. The consistent elements are generally the length of the phrase and the cadential pitches.

In my rehearsals with accomplished singers at Yale University in 2016, who spent seven months exclusively studying the Artem Erkomaishvili recordings and transcriptions where many such voice-crossing ornamental cadences may be found, I sometimes challenged the first voice to surprise the choir with a voice crossing at a moment of their choosing. We would practice with a simple memorized chant, such as “Aghdgomasa shensa”. The lower two voices must listen closely to know how to respond. This creates a sense of spontaneity in the performance that is thrilling for the singers, a quality that defines the performances heard in audio recordings from 1902–1914, when the oral transmission of chant was still active.

It is sometimes difficult to comprehend how singers could remember thousands of unwritten chants, many of them obscure texts for services conducted just once a year. To understand this question, we introduce the concept of the *Oktoechos* (eight-tones), a classification system used by medieval Georgian chanters to categorize melodic phrases into specific groups and categories. The eight-tone system was invented in the Levant in the 8th century, and quickly spread to all corners of Christendom as a useful classification system for the burgeoning numbers of hymnographic texts that were essential to the proper performance of the Orthodox rituals.⁵

In Georgia, the eight-tone system assisted memory retention and enabled the specific pedagogical techniques necessary to teach subsequent generations of chanters. While the texts were written in reference books available to the chanters, the music was generally not notated, as oral transmission remained the dominant pedagogical method for centuries.⁶ Many texts are repeated in the ordinary services, but for celebration services such as Pascha, Nativity, and many others, there are unique texts sung only once per year. On the one hand, the lack of notated music placed a heavy burden on the chanters to find and prepare the music for each festival service, while on the other hand, the lack of prescribed music allowed the singers to improvise each performance according to the skill level of their personnel. To organize the various melodic fragments, the eight-tone system itemized each melody according to a text genre and a tone. To understand how this process may have worked, I offer the following case study.

In 2009, I was invited to give a workshop to *Slavei*, an avid group of singers of Eastern European traditional music at Wesleyan University. As an experiment, I taught the model melody for tone 3 of the *kontakion* text genre. This genre and tonal assignment is a useful template because it is one of the most basic: it contains only two melodic phrase archetypes, each one containing about twenty notes of various durations, with a couple of variations and a final cadential phrase. (By contrast, tone 4 *troparia* contain up to ten melodic phrase archetypes of varying ornamental complexity).

For the group of about twenty singers, I first taught the two phrase-length melodic fragments without any notation. We sang by ear, using only Handout #1 (Example 10). Instead of the Georgian text, we sang the first note of each phrase to the generic text on the handout, “chanting note”, with each subsequent note sung to the numeric text, “one, two, three”. etc. After the entire choir had memorized the melody for the two model phrases, A and B, and the final cadential phrase, we memorized the second and third voice harmonization in the Gelati Monastery style, adding one simple variant for each phrase, A-1, and B-1.

⁵ The *Oktoechos* system first appears in the 8th century and has been attributed to John of Damascus. It became useful as a way to organize chants in many Christian chant repertoires including the Latin West, Byzantine, West Syrian, Coptic, Armenian, and Georgian. The Georgian *Oktoechos* differs from other systems in that it is entirely composed of melodic fragments rather than modal scales or cadential patterns.

⁶ A form of unique musical notation can be found in several manuscripts dating to the decades at the end of the 10th century, but this notation remains indecipherable today as it appears to have been a mnemonic shorthand for chanters already knowledgeable of the contemporary musical canon. Studies comparing this notation to the received chant in the 19th century oral tradition have yielded surprising correlations. See the publications of Zaal Tsereteli and Ekaterine Oniani.

A. *Chant-ing note*... one, two, three, four, five, six, sev'n, eight;

B. *Chant-ing note*... one, two, three, four, five, six, sev'n, eight, nine.

A1. *Chant-ing note*... one, two, three, four, five, six, sev'n, eight;

B1. *Chant-ing note*... one, two, three, four, five, six, sev'n, eight, nine.

Handout #1. Text-Melody Template for Kontakia, Tone 3

This process took about 45 minutes of intensive repetition: a surprising amount of time for advanced singers to learn only two phrases with a variant and the final cadence, perhaps, but it was entirely necessary for learning moderately complex melodies in three-voiced harmony by ear. Though unfamiliar with the Georgian chant idiom, the members of *Slavei* displayed excellent facility with learning new repertory by ear, a result of their experience singing from various unusual world music folk repertories including Macedonian, Bulgarian, and Georgian folk music.

When the choir felt relatively confident singing the model phrases to the text of “chanting note, one, two, three”. I produced a Georgian chant text and introduced the concept of text setting. The text was the kontakion for the Matins service of the Nativity in tone 3, “Kalts’uli dghes arsebad” [Today a Virgin].⁷ As the group looked at Handout #2 (Example 11), I asked them, “how would you set this text to the musical phrases that we just learned?”

ქალწული დღეს არსებად უზესთაესსა შობს ჩვენთვის,
და ქვეყანა ქვაბსა შეუხებელისა შესწირვენ;
ანგელოზნი მწყემსთა თანა დიდების მტყუველებენ,
ხოლო მოგენი ვარსკვლავისა თანა მოგზაურობენ;
რამეთუ ჩვენთვის იშვა ყრმა ახალი პირველ საუკუნეთა ღმერთი.

⁷ The full translation of the kontakion for Nativity, “Kaltsuli dghes arsebad”, is as follows: “Today a Virgin brings forth the Super-substantial, and the earth offers a cavern to the Unapproachable. Angels, together with the shepherds, sing praises; the wise men journey onward with the star. For, for our sakes, God, who is before all the ages, is born a little child”.

A: *kal-ts'u-li dghes ar-se-bad u-ze-sta-es-sa shobs chven-tvis,*

B: *da kve-qa-na kvab-sa she-u-khe-be-li-sa shes-ts'ir-ven;*

A1: *an-ge-loz-ni mts'qems-ta ta-na di-de-bis me-t'qve-le-ben,*

B1: *kho-lo mo-gvni var-sk'vla-vi-sa ta-na mo-gza-u-ro-ben;*

B1: *ra-me-tu chven-tvis ish-va qрма a-kha-li p'ir-vel sa-u-k'u-ne-ta*

Cadence: *ghmer-ti.*

Handout #2. Text of “Kalts’uli dghes arsebad” [Today a Virgin]

First, we used the natural commas within the text to mark off phrase endings, thus setting our phrasal cadence points. Then I assigned musical phrases to each texted phrase in the following order: A, B, A–1, B–1, B–1, and Cadence Final (which happens to be the phrase order of this particular chant, as inherited and transcribed in the nineteenth-century source manuscripts). Next, we puzzled out how to set each phrase to the melodies that we had learned. Because each of the six texted phrases varied in length, we needed to adapt them to the constraints of the model melodic phrases. Phrase A, for example, allows for eight sung syllables, while phrase B allows for nine. This was accomplished by counting backwards eight or nine syllables from each phrase ending and making a small sign above that particular syllable.

For example, in the first phrase of the chant, “*kal-ts'u-li dghes ar-se-bad u-ze-sta-es-sa shobs chven-tvis*”, there are a total of fifteen syllables. Only eight of these syllables may be sung in the melodic contour of melody A. Counting backwards eight syllables from the comma after *-tvis*, we made a small mark over the syllable *-u-*, indicating the syllable where the model melody must begin (see first line of text, Example 11). Before the neume, however, there are seven extra syllables. I suggested that these syllables be sung as recitative to the pitch of “chanting note”, while the syllable under the neume must begin the numeric text, “one, two..”, etc. We followed a similar process with setting text to phrase B, where nine syllables can be accommodated by the model melody, marking a neume over the syllable *-she-*. The extra six syllables are sung as a recitative at the start of the phrase. With our single neumes marking the place in each line of text where the melody must begin, we practiced the pronunciation of the text for five minutes and then attempted to perform the chant by looking only at Handout #2.

Remarkably, the choir was able to perform the unknown Georgian text in three-voiced harmony, without notation, on the first pass! They accomplished this feat by correctly recalling the three voice parts of model phrase A, and in the place of “chanting note”, they inserted the first seven syllables of text in recitative: *kal-ts'u-li dghes ar-se-bad*. In the place of “one, two, three, four, five”, they sang the text *u-ze-sta-es-sa*, taking their cue from the neume marking the beginning of the model melody.

After the run-through, and because we had spent the better part of our entire session learning just one piece, I asked them if they realized the gravity of their accomplishment. They didn't understand the question, so I explained as conspiratorially as possible that the product of our afternoon had not been the study of *only* one chant. On the contrary, we had just learned fifty chants. Any of fifty kontakia texts could now be set to the tone 3 model melodies learned and performed as required by rubric and service. With the memorization of all the key components of the chant, and knowing how to divide the text into phrases, then assign the beginning of the melody for each phrase, they were ready to set any text to kontakia tone 3.

A

Chant-ing note _____ one_ two three four_ five six_ sev'n_ eight,
 Kal - ts'u-li dghes ar-se-bad u - ze - sta - es - sa_ shobs chven - tvis,

Chant-ing note _____ one_ two three four_ five six_ sev'n_ eight,
 Kal - ts'u - li dghes ar-se-bad u - ze - sta - es - sa_ shobs chven - tvis,

Chant-ing note _____ one_ two three four_ five six_ sev'n_ eight,
 Kal - ts'u-li dghes ar-se-bad u - ze - sta - es - sa_ shobs chven - tvis,

B

chant-ing note _____ one_ two_ three four_ five_ six_ sev'n eight nine,
 da kve-qa-na kvab-sa_ she - u - khe - be - li - sa_ shes - ts'i - ren,

chant-ing note _____ one_ two_ three four_ five_ six_ sev'n eight nine,
 da kve-qa-na kvab-sa_ she - u - khe - be - li - sa_ shes - ts'i - ren,

chant-ing note _____ one_ two_ three four_ five_ six_ sev'n eight nine,
 da kve-qa-na kvab-sa_ she - u - khe - be - li - sa_ shes - ts'i - ren,

“Kalts’uli dghes arsebad” [Today a Virgin], first two phrases

Example 12 shows a transcription of the first two phrases of the chant, “Kalts’uli dghes arsebad” as learned and performed by the *Slavei* ensemble. Note: the choir did not see this notated transcription, they only possessed the two handouts.

This experiment proves that given the correct training in the oral tradition of chant, with its attendant skills, average singers can easily perform completely unknown texts with minimal rehearsal. Here is a list of the skills that must be developed by a chant student, in order to fulfill the duty of setting and singing unknown texts, a requirement of nearly every service. Singers must have the ability to:

1. Memorize and recall the model melodies (300–400 phrase-length melodic fragments).

2. Learn the technique of harmonizing and ornamenting model melodies in three-voice parts.
3. Divide texts and mark the beginning of the model melody with a neume.

What the choir had learned in a one-hour workshop was a small fragment of what medieval students learning by rote would study for years in order to master the entire corpus of model melodies and their manifestation in three voices.

* * * * *

The following discussion continues the theme of text setting, but in this case concerns texts in translation. I have sometimes been asked to teach Georgian chant for practical performance, that is, for Orthodox Christian services in the vernacular language. There is a tradition in the Orthodox Church of America, for example, to sing hymns of praise from different global Orthodox musical traditions for major feast days such as Pascha. The Georgian “Kriste aghdga” (Christ is Risen) has become a favorite hymn amongst a collection of Byzantine, Serbian, Russian, American, and other musical variants that are performed regularly every Pascha by hundreds of OCA church choirs. The English text “Christ is Risen” is set to the melodies of these various musical traditions in order to perform the liturgy in the vernacular language (in this case English, but it could be French, Finnish, or Japanese depending on the country of the Orthodox Church). It is worth examining how this process takes place.

Krist'e aghdga - ქრისტე აღდგა

Transcribed by John A. Graham
Georgian: Svanetian regional variant
www.georgianchant.org

♩ = 140

First line solo (with fine tempo)

kri - ste agh - dga mk'vdré - tit, si - k'vdi - li - ta si - k'vdi - li - sa

kri - ste agh - dga mk'vdré - tit, si - k'vdi - li - ta si - k'vdi - li - sa

kri - ste agh - dga mk'vdré - tit, si - k'vdi - li - ta si - k'vdi - li - sa

dam - tgun - ve - li da sa - pla - ve - bis shi - na - ta tskho - vre - bis mim - ni - ch'e - be - li

dam - tgun - ve - li da sa - pla - ve - bis shi - na - ta tskho - vre - bis mim - ni - ch'e - be - li

dam - tgun - ve - li da sa - pla - ve - bis shi - na - ta tskho - vre - bis mim - ni - ch'e - be - li

“Kriste aghdga” (Georgian), Svanetian regional oral tradition

When I was asked to provide details on the Paschal troparion for the website www.GeorgianChant.org, I collected as many different musical variants of “Kriste aghdga” as I could find. The variant we discuss here (Example 13) was inherited through oral tradition in the remote mountain region of Svaneti in northwestern Georgia. It wasn’t notated until recent years but has become the most popular variant among Georgian church choir singers throughout the country, who learn it mostly by ear from recordings. This variant has also become popular among international Orthodox communities, as it has been set in various other languages. As I observed that some of these arrangements did not closely follow the important pitches of the model melody for Tone 5 troparia, I made my own arrangements, following the Georgian music as closely as possible (Example 14).

The process is difficult, given that the English text has far fewer syllables than the Georgian. Even with extensive study of the important theoretical aspects of Georgian chant structure, such as the model melodies, conventional harmonizations according to each school, and common ornamentation patterns as discussed thus far, arrangements in different languages can be extremely challenging and may never quite match the originals.

Krist'e aghdga - Christ is Risen

Arranged into English by John A. Graham
Georgian: Svanetian regional variant
www.georgianchant.org

Triumphant, majestic
♩ = 140

T-1
Christ is ris-en from the dead tramp-ling down death by death, and up-on those in the

T-2
First time solo (with free tempo)
Christ is ris-en from the dead tramp-ling down death by death, and up-on those in the

B
Christ is ris-en from the dead tramp-ling down death by death, and up-on those in the

1. 2. tombs be - stow - ing life! tombs be - stow - ing life!

3. *rit.* tombs be - stow - ing life! *rit.* tombs be - stow - ing life!

4. *rit.* tombs be - stow - ing life! *rit.* tombs be - stow - ing life!

5. *rit.* tombs be - stow - ing life! *rit.* tombs be - stow - ing life!

“Kriste aghdga” (English), Svanetian regional oral tradition

The first challenge for an arranger is to find a suitable compromise between the translated text and the original music without compromising either. The Georgian text has 34 syllables, while the English text only has 24 syllables, largely due to the fact that the four-syllable word *sikvdilita* in Georgian translates

as the one-syllable word *death* (likewise *saplavebis* translates as *tombs*). Having less syllables is not a bad problem to have (the opposite would be far more difficult), but it still forces a number of decisions discussed below. Another thorny issue is the word order: obviously the word order cannot be changed in either language, so important climactic musical moments on significant words in the source might fall on insignificant words in the English translation. So, the first question becomes, with less syllables, where are we going to spread out the English text, and how are we going to emphasize important English words without dramatically changing the source music?

In the medieval period, we might simply reduce the number of syllables sung to the “chanting note” at the beginning of the phrase, as the music was subservient to the length of the texts. But in this case, where the music is being set to another language text, it is important not to lose the feeling of the original music. Also, and especially for this chant, the opening text on the “chanting note” is the all-important declamation “Christ is Risen!” sung by a soloist signifying the entrance to the tomb at the beginning of the all-night Paschal vigil. The music is more important in this case, and it is the translated text that must be subservient to the original music. Thus, the first measure must remain as identical as possible.

Georgian: kriste aghdga mkvdretit, sikvdilita sikvdilisa, damtrgunveli da saplavebis shinata tskhovrebis mimnichebeli!

English: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and upon those in the tombs restoring life!

In measure 2 of the Georgian text, we have the four-syllable words *sikvdilita sikvdilisa* (death by death), which musically feels like a recitative whose music could be reduced or expanded. The English text *trampling down* precedes *death by death*, for a total of six syllables which, even though the words are out of order, almost matches the eight syllables in the Georgian phrase. The musical climax in measure 3 is given to the important verb *damtrgunveli* (trampling) in the Georgian, but the English word *trampling* has already occurred in measure 2. It is somewhat distressing to set this musically climactic moment to the relatively insignificant words, *and upon*, which must follow if we are to observe proper word order. Thus, the first major hurdle of this arrangement. The closest English word of significance would be *those*. So, we place *those* on the climactic musical summit and measure 3, which helps us arrange measure 2. What is the best way to set the text *and upon* into the fabric of the preceding music without damaging any musical conventions of Georgian chant (see transition from measure 2 to measure 3, Example 14)? I’ve chosen to add *and up-* to the recitative notes in measure 2, while *-on* leads us through tension building chords at the beginning of measure 3 to the musical climax.

The Georgian chant emphasizes the word *tskhovrebis* (life) with a long held musical note at the beginning of measure 4. Unfortunately, in the English translation, the word *life* is at the very end of the text, so there is no avoiding its setting as the final note of the piece. The arranger must choose at this point which English word to place in the climactic musical moment in measure 4. The choices are few. It can either be *tombs* or *bestow-ing*. As one can see, I chose *tombs*, which forces the words *those in the* into a highly melismatic arrangement to cover the ten notes in measure 3. The text *bestowing life* can be spread

evenly over the final cadential bar, which feels more appropriate than other options as most Georgian chants end with syllabic texts in the cadence, as discussed in Examples 10–11–12.⁸

When teaching “*Kriste aghdga*” to international singers, I try to impress upon them the importance of singing this particular variant in a performance practice that is appropriate to the region of its origin (Svaneti), which is also what lowland Georgian singers emulate when they sing this variant. Characteristics of Svanetian performance practice can be observed in the many recordings of folk music that abound on the internet today, or in live performances in Georgia. A general description might include the choice to sing open-throated, loudly and boldly, with ringing overtones especially in the close-harmony dissonant chords characteristic of Svanetian harmony (chords including a 5–4–1 chord such as D–C–G. See the second chord of the word *tombs*, Example 11, measure 3). They don’t mind a few glissandos. The traditional tuning tends sharp, as the extremely bright sound pushes the outer limits of the open-fifth chords between the outer voices, while the middle voice tends to sing *closer* than a whole tone to the top voice when singing the 5–4–1 chords (John Graham, Princeton 2015: 309).⁹ Thus through repetition, the entire chant might tend to drift sharp.

The chant begins by unusual convention among liturgical chants with a soloist singing the opening declamation, a practice similar to the beginning of many folk songs. On subsequent repeats, the outer voices sing the entire chant (see small note heads, Example 11, measure 1). The upper voice parts are most often sung by soloists, while the rest of the singers support with the lowest voice part. As the text is repeated many times throughout the Paschal service, different singers may take turns singing the upper voice parts. If there is a large choir, a director may choose to ask more singers to join the upper voice parts, but the lowest voice should always have more singers than the upper voice parts to provide the correct balance. A choir with tenor-tenor-bass, or soprano-soprano-alto, is preferable to a mixed choir of alto-alto-baritone, simply for the sake of the timbre of the voices. I always encourage choir directors to let the soprano and tenor voices ring with their natural timbre in their natural upper middle ranges.

The question of vocal style is unavoidable as singers need to know *how* to sing as much as they need to know *what* to sing. With every choir and in every workshop, I try to give a balanced introduction to the various styles that one might hear among Georgian chanters, but it is impossible to describe how fiercely debated these questions can become among Georgian performers. Each particular style has a history, an affiliation, and thus a signification of identity in the modern performance of chant. The following discussion does not address which style is better or worse, but how teachers might help to contextualize the debate for international singers, so that they can make their own informed choices on how to sing Georgian chant, even when performing in different languages in different Orthodox cultural contexts.

Ethnomusicologist Philip Bohlman has warned that the “authenticity of music is erased when meshed with nationalism”, because of an “aesthetic leveling” to share the language of the majority. In other words, any attempt to create a homogenous national music ends up destroying the very diversity of the

⁸ The first, second, and third endings present only some of the possible ornamental cadence varieties that might be encountered among Georgian traditional singers. Other variants can be heard in the various audio recordings collected on the www.GeorgianChant.org website.

⁹ To learn more about Georgian traditional tuning, see the PhD dissertation by John Graham

music it purports to popularize. In Georgia, folk music was nationalized during the early 20th century, which brought a great deal of focus and attention to the music, but also created singular performance styles sanctioned by authorities for performance on stage. At the same time, the public performance of religious music was completely banned.

In the 1950s and 1960s, a new style of singing folk music became popular, the so-called *academic style* (by which is meant a *bel canto* style common in Western choral practice). In 1990, when Soviet censorship ceased and choirs began singing religious chants more openly, it was possible to choose which style to sing and record. Two of the first recordings of church chant to emerge during this period illustrate the dichotomy between the classical and neo-traditional *folk* performance styles:

1. “Sacred Music and Chorales”, released by the Rustavi Ensemble in 1995, highlights the dynamic control and blend for which the choir had become internationally famous throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The repertory of chant and para-liturgical hymns on this album represents four distinct sources: three-voiced adaptations of mixed SATB choral arrangements by the early twentieth-century composer Zakaria Paliashvili, sung in academic style; chants inherited by director Anzor Erkomaishvili from his family in Guria, also sung in academic style; modern compositions, sung in academic style; and finally a selection of para-liturgical folk hymns, these sung in a folk style.

2. “Celebration Hymns”, released by the Anchiskhati Church Choir in 1995, is a stellar example of the neo-traditional performance style promoted by the Mtiebi Ensemble in the 1970s, here applied to sacred music. The entire repertory is from archival transcriptions and is sung in a neo-traditional folk style. The diction is clean, tempos increased to be more speech-like, and individual voices are encouraged not to blend, but to find individual timbre. The upper voices are always sung by soloists, giving each recording a distinctive sound from the combination of the individual singer’s timbres.

One of the only chants that appears on both albums, “Shen khar venakhi” [You Are a Vineyard], may serve as an interesting case study for a discussion on performance practice choices. The Rustavi State Ensemble performs the hymn in a deliberately slow, sweet, and delicate manner, while the straightforward, folksy rendition by the Anchiskhati Church Choir is performed significantly faster. The secular mainstream society associates this chant with weddings and celebrations as well as moments of deep cultural pathos, such as the death of a dignitary or the loss of a battle.¹⁰ But church singers have reclaimed the hymn as a text by the twelfth-century King Demetre II dedicated not to secular events, but as a praise text devoted to the Holy Theotokos.¹¹

Both choirs sing in the style of their own performance aesthetic, and it is curious that there is very little overlap in the selection of repertory for the two albums. Whereas the performance practice adopted

¹⁰ During the conflict between Russia and Georgia in August 2008, the chant “Shen khar venakhi” was performed by the Basiani Ensemble and televised live by CNN and local networks, carrying the local signification of a hymn such as “We Shall Overcome” might in English-speaking countries.

¹¹ In a bizarre twist, a Russian arrangement (c. 1995) used the melodies of the Paliashvili arrangement of “Shen khar venakhi” for a setting of the Cherubic Hymn. This was subsequently translated into English and has since become one of the most popular arrangements of the Cherubic Hymn in the Orthodox Church of America. Georgians are baffled at the combination of the melody from one chant with the text of another, especially considering that several versions of the Cherubic Hymn survive in the transcription record, and because the model melody of the Cherubic Hymn is strictly assigned and should not be modified.

by the Anchiskhati Choir has been influential mostly in church choirs throughout the country, where choirs tend to prioritize singing text in a straight-forward and easy to hear manner, the “academic style” of the Rustavi Ensemble remains far more influential in mainstream society as “high art”. Thus, when one hears a chant like “Shen khar venakhi” sung in an academic style, it is usually in a secular cultural context (wedding party, televised public performance, stage performance, background music to state funeral, etc.), whereas when it is sung in a neo-traditional style, the performance practice usually signals that the chant is being performed in a church service context as influenced by the Anchiskhati Choir.

The debate about performance practice was sharpened in the late 1990s by the emergence of a Byzantine chant movement, which polarized those already involved in the revival of traditional chant.¹² Proponents of the Byzantinist movement argued that Orthodox Christian chant had originally and properly been sung to monophonic melodies and advocated adapting the entire Georgian liturgy to borrowed Greek-Byzantine melodies. Basing their credentials on the dubious scholarly claim that all Christian chant traditions should be supplanted by modern Greek monophonic melodies (which have themselves sketched an extraordinarily complex historical development), the Byzantine chant movement in Georgia was short lived, and ultimately fell victim to a strong backlash from the Georgian liturgical music community in the late 1990s.

On the other side of the debate, scholars and chant revivalists in the mid-1990s coalesced around the need to publicize and promote the history of traditional 19th century chanters such as the Karbelashvili brothers, who had received little if any public attention since the first decade of the twentieth century. As a result, recordings, articles, and public lectures generated a wide degree of public support and culminated in a Patriarchal decree in the year 2000 advocating for the integration of traditional Georgian three-voiced chant into all parish choir repertoires, with a mandate to research, edit, and publish the available source manuscripts for widespread distribution.

In 2003, the Holy Synod of the Georgian Orthodox Church adopted even stronger language: “Georgian traditional polyphonic chant always has been, and continues to be, the canonical chant of the Georgian Orthodox Church. Its performance is compulsory in every Georgian church and everywhere the divine services are celebrated in the Georgian language” (Sukhiashvili and Oniani). This decree not only signaled the failure of the Byzantinist movement in Georgia, but also gave a strong boost to the neo-traditional chanters such as the Anchiskhati Church Choir and their students, who were placed in charge of a commission to oversee the editing and publishing of new chant-books, and assigned with monitoring the progress of parish and monastic choirs across the nation.

Today, more than ever, international students of liturgical music may also enjoy the joy of singing Georgian polyphonic liturgical chant. We hope this article sparks increased interest among serious students to delve deeper into the theory of model melodies, regional school styles, ornamental styles, text setting, performance styles, and traditional tuning, in order to learn more about the beauty and complexity of this sophisticated chant system. Happy singing!

¹² The “Byzantinists” declared that Greek-Byzantine monody was the only true Christian chant style, rejecting all other forms of chant including Slavonic or Georgian traditional or composed chant. In several churches in Georgia, one can still hear Georgian texts sung to Greek-Byzantine melodies.

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THE FOREIGN PERFORMERS OF TRADITIONAL GEORGIAN MUSIC

Introduction

Georgian music is not just a beautiful musical experience, but a fundamental component of Georgian culture and identity. It also expresses a collective consciousness focused on protecting and preserving identity and on profound human relationships.¹

I'll begin the article with this impressive definition belonging to an amateur Belgian musician. At the start, I must point out the remarkably deep perceptions and analyses of foreign performers interested in Georgian music, which are usually significant angles of seeing things from our point of view as "insiders".

The topic of foreign performers of traditional Georgian music has been the focus of interest and study by many ethnomusicologists or performers. I think getting to know and reviewing all the extant academic or practical information will be intriguing for observing the issue's dynamics. At this point in time, the discrepancies in research goals, tasks, and accordingly, findings are crucial to me.

In the previous decades some observations concerning the area of the spread of Georgian singing abroad; the study of the practical, technical, and physiological characteristics of singing in foreign groups such as verbal or musical intonation nuances, the characteristics of learning material from oral or printed music sources take in the previous decade (Bloom, 2003: 564–576; Zumbadze, 2003: 541–551; Kane, 2003: 552–563).

Today, by analyzing the discussions of practical performers and groups, the influence of traditional Georgian singing and chant on people's psycho-emotional, internal, or physiological states – the physical sensations experienced during this process² – is becoming quite pertinent.

The aim of my study is really presented by the observations of these processes, whereas the task is understanding and analyzing these observations:

1. The reason for foreign interest in Georgian music to become more reasoned and evident.
2. Stemming from these reasons, it shall be analyzed as to specifically which features/characteristics attract them in this process.
3. What features of Georgian music "feed" their psycho-emotional world and interest.³

Outcome: a study reflecting current extant attitudes, approaches, and practices will be written based on a re-evaluation of certain academic literature in the ethnomusicological realm, and on the analysis of personal observations and focus group interviews.

¹ Jean Francois Hubermont (Belgium, IT Program Manager).

² I will review this topic based on personal interviews.

³ Implied are the findings of private or group workshops with foreign students, and the focus group interviews conducted specifically for this study.

I conducted the study with a qualitative method using introductory observations, personal interviews, and focus group discussions. The focus group was represented by foreign performers of Georgian singing in the 30–65 age category (around 20 people). The method of selecting respondents was purposeful since my goal was to talk about Georgian music with performers having some level of experience. Study area: Australia, Canada, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Switzerland.

I use several theories in the study: Alan Merriam: the study of music in culture (Merriam, 1964: 15–37).

Mantle Hood: bi-musicality (Hood, 1960: 55–59). Douglas: bicultural identity (Bloom, Douglas, 2007: 12–49).

Literary Analysis and Interpretation

First off with Alan Merriam’s definition: “To understand the essence of music, the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the people creating this music must be analyzed (Merriam, *ibid.*)”.

Out of a diverse array of definitions, Merriam worked up a concept to define ethnomusicology: “the study of music in culture” (Merriam, 1964: 34), which fully corresponds to the attitudes and methods of modern foreigners when learning traditional Georgian music. As Merriam explains it, a synthesis of ethnomusicology and ethnology is implied in this. Our study’s case is even more relevant – a merging of music and ethnography, to which I would add the widely spread study of colloquial language and script.

“Musical sound is a result of a process of human behavior formed through values, attitudes, and beliefs of the people who comprise a specific culture (Merriam, 1964: 19)”. Attitudes manifested during interviews with the focus groups are in tune with this thesis, when respondents noted that while listening to or singing Georgian folk music, Georgia’s entire history and culture, with its joys and travails,⁴ unfolds before them; the identity and the visions and experiences of their ancestors are accumulated in each song.⁵

When analyzing studies of foreign music and culture, Mantle Hood’s theory of bi-musicality referencing the presence of a double identity is interesting (Hood, 1960: 56). Bi-, tri-, or tetra-musicality implies the cultural broadening of people’s native musical thought. This process and outcome are stipulated by globalization, a new, so-called broader way of thinking. This deduction is strengthened by Douglas’ idea that globalization facilitates the formation of “bicultural identities” comprising local and global characteristics.

A physician by profession, Mrs. Anne Maynard from Switzerland, an admirer, and performer of Georgian music describes the process of singing a Georgian song as emotionally connecting her to those extremely old rituals not to be forgotten in modern life.⁶

Despite being from a foreigner, it becomes apparent through such definitions that a different ethnic identity does not hinder an intellectual person in this case from imaginatively becoming a participant of the process from the context of a functional past. This echoes precisely with the bicultural theory of a modern person.

⁴ Montie Stetham, Canada; Jean Fransua Hubermont, Belgium (personal interviews, 11. 07. 2022).

⁵ Anne Maynard, Switzerland; Holly Taylor, Great Britain (personal interviews, 09. 07. 2022).

⁶ Personal interview, 10. 07. 2022.

In his article, “Methods of Learning Georgian Singing in Foreign Choirs Studying Georgian Singing” (Kane, 2003: 552–563), Frank Kane highlights the challenge of attaining a sense of the natural flavor of a song as one of the main problems when studying Georgian singing.

In order to find the specific dimension of the Georgian sound, he points out the benefit of a glissando exercise method in seconds and thirds. Imitating the timbre of village singers is considered by him to be significant.

It is debatable whether this method is necessary or not in attaining the essence of Georgian singing, although, in the case of classifying study methods, the techniques and experience of being under the influence of someone else, of imitating them might be placed as some of the first, initial steps.

It is interesting, but Kane’s discourse on timbre and harmonics is vague to me. I think timbre is the individual, unique characteristic of the voice directly connected to a person’s psychological state, to their internal mind (which clearly implies physiological relaxation, but not specific movements of the mouth), and less associated with such concepts as “geometry of the vocal tract and a general physical state”.

Some observations based on various books and practical knowledge are conveyed in the article, which Kane equates with the idea that some types of physical, facial, or throat movements will lead us to a definitive Georgian or non-Georgian village singer sound – a certain singing style. This concept is established by the practitioner through experiments with his own French ensembles – Marani and Irinola – and through Edisher Garakanidze’s thought that the ideal method of learning Georgian singing is going to a village and singing with local singers for as long as possible. As I pointed out, it is questionable as to how natural a method it is to attempt the imitation of village singers while with them and adopt the physical state of their bodies when singing.

In my opinion, it is important everyone finds themselves in this sound when learning the music of any foreign culture, and not whether a certain intonation or an entire song sounds like a singer of that country. Even more, when this takes place through the physiological adoption of various body part movements, because the vocal apparatus, chords, structure, and individual qualities or features – are diverse and unique in each person like a timbre, a vocal coloration. The method worked out through Kane’s interesting observations and practical experiences, I think, causes mental and physical stress in performers and learners, thereby logically ruling out a performer or group finding a comfortable, natural, and carefree singing style. Even the quality of this process’s value described in the article, first of all (especially at an amateur level), is determined by how freely and sincerely a person sings, and by how much they manage to bring to light their inner world needs to be expressed.

I would cite my personal practice as an example – when I am studying and singing a Hungarian, Ukrainian, or Portuguese folklore song, I first off listen to the original source – performed live or through a recording – I observe the singing manner, style, mood, emotion, and peculiarities different from or similar to my native music. Then, I attempt to filter all this through my individual prism and only then do I find my own sort of performance style (and not some specific states of the vocal apparatus), without which I think it is devoid of any experience of pleasure during the singing process, it is fake.

Still, everything, as well as the teaching methods and styles, might be as diverse as the number of ensemble styles, aesthetics, and artistic aims in existence.

It is also possible that such specific advice given as physical techniques for the singing process turns out to be beneficial for some types of people.

Likewise, it is specific that the main value of this ensemble type, stemming from an analysis of the method, is to replicate a Georgian village singer's sound type, singing manner, and timbre, and not to find the creative essence and mood of a song, because I think the goal of the latter type requires working with other methods and techniques.

Questions for Foreign Performers

Using a method of focus groups and personal interviews to form a certain, systematic point of view, I worked with around 20 foreign students and colleagues.

As a result, some systematic relationships took definite shape, presented as findings by me.

What relationship do foreigners interested in Georgian singing have regarding a cultural phenomenon studied and promulgated in their own countries for decades?

On the question – What do you love in Georgian music and why?

Several types of responses became clear:

- When the value of the polyphonic phenomenon in Georgian music is singled out by respondents.
- The diversity of styles and regional characteristics.
- “The creation process of unique, mystical harmonies>”
- When social unity and interconnection between participating individuals during choral singing is

of paramount importance to performers.

“The thing I love most in Georgian folklore music is that which the Georgians themselves see within it – a function of social unity, a human connection”. (Frank Kane, France)

“When you're unable to sing most Georgian songs without any fellow singers and harmonic production is quite crucial in them”. (Holly Taylor, Great Britain)

“Georgian singing has the remarkable ability to awaken a strong interconnection between people”. (Montie Stethem, Canada)

The second important I had for foreign performers during the study was, what did they like during the process of performing a Georgian song?

Two basic trends took shape in the responses, which in some cases coincided with answers to the first question:

1. When performers sense a psycho-emotional, as well as physical “renewal” during the singing process; “with the revival of brain cells” ... which according to their observations, was caused, on one hand, through the creation of exotic, “unusual” sonorities, and harmonies foreign to European ears; “the discovery of a musical treasury”; as well as unity experienced during choral singing.

“...I'm drawn by the interaction and discovery of new magic between people in this process”. (Derek Wilcox, Great Britain)

“The emotional charge and replenishment brought by Georgian three-voice singing are extremely important to me”. (Susan Thompson, Great Britain)

2. On the other hand, the ritualistic, historical context of Georgian music, the function, and contents

of songs, and “the ancestral connection” (Holly Taylor, Great Britain) stand out for some foreign performers.

“This process connects me through the senses to those extremely old rituals not to be forgotten in modern life”. (Anne Maynard, Switzerland)

The Peculiarities of Learning Georgian Singing

It is significant that foreigners interested in learning Georgian singing also enthusiastically study the Georgian language, script, and playing various instruments. On one hand, a multifaceted, profound approach to the topic is something that generally defines them. Also attesting to this is the fact that, per my experience, most of them are studying all three voices of simple and complex songs. This provides them with the means of perceiving the harmony and composition in their entirety from different angles; of grasping each facet comprising the polyphony through their own practical experience and not just by listening to other voices.

Besides learning the language and script, the most frequent thing is when foreigners enraptured by Georgian singing and culture visit Georgia on a continual basis. If not most of the year, they at least spend a few months here. They travel to the districts and villages (mostly in the mountainous regions) and live with the locals. These people try to become more familiar with a way of life different and intriguing to them. They search out living continuations of folk art, creation, and echoes from the past in Georgia, and even find them for the most part. This has an exotic attraction for them because the life of ethnic traditional culture in the present in their countries is mostly faded or lost. Their basic desire is to experience some participation in this vitality and renaissance as an expression of complicit nostalgia for folk wisdom and creativity.

Examples of Knowledge Systematization

The relationship foreigners have with the learned material and songs from a systematization standpoint is exemplary. Most of them have gathered song texts, translations, and in some cases, sheet music, arranged them in alphabetical order according to the title, and bound them as handmade books.

I think it is a distinct feature that learning and listening to Georgian songs, in most cases, are of interest and possible for foreigners with distinguished intellectual development. They primarily have extensive knowledge and have found accomplishment in their own professions. It is difficult to single out every profession, but from practical experience, frequent professions are archeologists, theater, film designers/illustrators, actors, artists, psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors, IT technologists, dancers, and so on. As we can see, most of them are people with creative proclivities.

The fact that they are frequently interested in Bulgarian, Balkan, and Corsican polyphonic songs is also salient.

Singing, Vocal Production, and Physical Vibration

Theories and practical, technical exercises for vibrating the body during singing are gradually becoming more popular in developed countries. The topic of the relationship between voice and body, and the therapeutic function of singing, stand out as some of the primary interests for foreigners and Georgians studying Georgian singing.⁷ From this standpoint, Frank Kane's teachings focused on learning physical vibrations while performing Georgian songs are quite popular the world over. Clearly, observing and learning the state of the body during vocal production are crucial, although I think this process is an outcome and results from the psycho-emotional condition of each performer and only after this do they produce the vibrational frequencies required for a certain song. Studying the process from this angle might yield no fewer intriguing results.

According to Stephan Andersen: "The singing of Georgian songs with other people evokes extraordinary physical sensations, a state of breathtaking astonishment, an experience of an unusual relationship, of unity. Your body is enveloped in this sonority and lets you fully feel the space around you, filling you with an inner energy..."

Jean Francois Humbert (Belgium) describes the singing process as thus: "The performance of Georgian songs especially demands the full involvement of mind and body, at the same a powerful vibrational experience partakes in this, which reaches a zenith during singing a Georgian song".

Through my experience of working with foreign students, a technique when concentration takes place on the body's receptivity to the universe, an inner relationship to the sounds of nature, the heavenly bodies is established, a dialogue with them through the voice and emotions occurs, and through this, inner harmony is attained, is effective.

These exercise techniques for inner contemplation and listening to oneself are valuable and important processes for most students. Because this is shown by practice – if a singer has not or was unable to open up to themselves, to their inner world, or was unable to seek out some way to enter into themselves in order to bring to light their own individual views, sounds, and feelings expressed in intonation, phrasing, in revealing a natural sound and timbre, there will be no enjoyment in the performance process or attainment of an artistic result. This is the same as an artist beginning and ending their self-development or art study by reproducing other artists, when this technique is only taught as a beginner course at art academies in order to understand the classical techniques of past centuries. Independent artist only takes shape when they develop their individual creative journey based on this accumulated knowledge and techniques.

I will focus on several findings at the conclusion of the study.

As an academic innovation of the study through a combination of focus group and personal interviews, several basic tendencies took shape through a systematic analysis of foreign performers' new observations, findings, and interests:

⁷ Frank Kane's workshops distinguished for the importance of physical vibrations while performing Georgian songs through studying and practical exercises enjoy immense popularity among foreign performers. It is worth noting that Kane's approaches, based on several years of practical experiments, have changed to some extent, which, in his opinion, can become the subject of future discussions.

- The importance of the polyphony of traditional Georgian singing and chant.
- An interest in the regional, stylistic diversity of songs.
- The importance of the social aspects of learning and performing polyphonic works, of choral cohesiveness, unity, and singer connectedness as forms and processes of people sharing with each other.
- The experience and conceptualization of the ritualistic context of traditional Georgian music with its history and ancestral connection. This attitude provides the means for them to be imaginary participants of a past cultural process.

I hope the topics analyzed in the study will certainly be things ponder and be of help to those interested in traditional Georgian music, or to those future Georgian or foreign performers and scholars yet to show interest.

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CHAPTER 5

MIGRATION PROCESSES AND IDENTITY

TRADITIONAL POLYPHONY OUTSIDE OF THE HOMELAND: A COMPARISON OF GEORGIAN AND UKRAINIAN CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

Introduction

This paper reflects on the practices of traditional Georgian and Ukrainian polyphony outside of their respective homelands. In particular, it surveys these two musical forms as they are practiced in and around the city of Toronto. Ethnographic work for this paper is based in large part on participatory observation in these musical communities, which has been ongoing since my first forays into polyphonic singing with the Toronto-based Georgian song ensemble *Darbazi* in 1995 and the Ukrainian-Canadian community group *Kosa Kolektiv* in 2013. Moreover, as a third generation Ukrainian-Canadian having married a Georgian immigrant traditional singer in 2001, I am even more intimately positioned to observe and understand these musical communities.

The paper addresses each practice separately, briefly documenting the following:

1. The context of each musical practice in the homeland – both in terms of who are its practitioners, the longevity of the practice, and the defining musical characteristics.
2. A description of the Toronto diasporas and relevant history of their musical practice.
3. The current performance practice, which addresses the different groups performing, how songs are learned, the performance context, and some reflections on its relationship with the homeland.

A significant difference between the two singing practices is how Georgian polyphony in Toronto is performed by a small and relatively new diaspora with little institutional support, while in the homeland, the cultural form is supported by a complex of government policies, institutions, organizations, and projects that aim to make Georgian polyphony not just the cultural pride of Georgia, but also of the world. On the other hand, Ukrainians in Toronto have a large population and a long history, but their polyphonic songs, while powerful, vast, and diverse in the homeland, have been relatively obscured. Of interest is how both practices in Toronto involve non-nationals as well what Thomas Turino describes as “participatory performances”, which ensure the songs are not just for stage presentation but are experienced in an interdisciplinary way, as part of a larger cultural expression that is instrumental for the establishment and maintenance of community (2008).

Georgia

Georgia, an independent country located on the eastern side of the Black Sea in the mountainous region of the Caucasus, is a land identified with the archetypes of Greek legends and traces of the ancient Sumerian and Hittite civilizations. It is also marked by a turbulent past, reflecting how Arabs, Mongols, Persians, Turks, and Russians engaged in conflicts and vied for power. Despite this, the Georgians, who have no migratory myths to speak of, have survived and continue to identify with deep ancestral claims to the land.

Gorgia: Current Musical Practice in the Homeland

Polyphony as the Protagonist¹

Traditional Georgian vocal polyphony functions to reinforce these claims. Indeed, polyphonic folk songs are the long-standing protagonist of Georgian culture – both at home and abroad. Georgian scholars trace the notion of three distinct voices in the musical form to a text from as far back as the 11th century (Petritsi in Pirtskhalava 2003: 120–2). Since the 19th century, and in contrast to the central Asian and Middle Eastern musical styles that influenced urban and elite musical practices, the rural-based polyphonic singing tradition was seen as a pure expression of Georgianness. The musical form, however, was seriously threatened by repressive Russian imperialist and Soviet rule from the late 18th into the mid-20th century. While pockets of the practice survived through singing families in villages, conscious attempts to revive the vernacular folk practice started in the 1960s, and the religious form in the late 1980s. Serious revival efforts only really started in the 2000s, after UNESCO’s 2001 proclamation identifying Georgian polyphony as a “Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity”. From that point onward, official government policy; institutionalized support; foreign and domestic funding of publications, projects, and festivals; nationalist rhetoric; and vernacular grassroots practices throughout Georgia, and effectively throughout the world, celebrate Georgia through its polyphony.

UNESCO, And Recent Revitalizing Activities

Urbanization and technical innovation have displaced the original rural-based context of much of Georgian polyphony. Traveling, harvesting, wedding, healing, ritual, and other such songs no longer had any purpose, but the songs survived in casual social performances (primarily around the table at a *supra* – the traditional Georgian feast) and in ensemble settings. For the first decade of the 2000s, many of these ensembles were based in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. The UNESCO driven revitalization projects, however, were instrumental in popularizing and returning the musical practice to the rural regions. A complex infrastructure of institutions and programs that resulted includes:

- The establishment of the International Research Centre on Traditional Polyphony, which hosts international scholars and conferences, publishes books and bulletins, and fosters critical international dialogue and scholarship on Georgian polyphony.
- The International Centre for Georgian Folk Song’s publications of memoirs, song books, study guides, and new recordings; their retrieval and remastering of old archival recordings; their digitization of content and use of updated technology to facilitate studies and entice the younger generation.
- The Folklore State Centre of Georgia (FSC) resurrecting the Soviet folk “Olympiads” under the name of the National Folklore Festival, which not only gives an incentive for regional ensembles to develop skills and repertoire for the competition but also provides clear guidelines for the authentic musical qualities of Georgian polyphony, thus tackling the misnomers of past Soviet or contemporary popular musical influence. The strictness of these guidelines aims to counteract the extreme degradation of standardization and reharmonization of the folk repertoire that occurred during the Soviet era. Among

¹ I would like to thank my friend and colleague, Mario Morello, for suggesting the word “protagonist” to describe the role of polyphony in Georgian culture.

other things, the guidelines address the use of single voices for the two top parts of the three-part musical form; appropriate choice of repertoire given the ensemble's location and gender; effective use of improvisation and/or variations; attention to using the appropriate tuning and avoiding tempered intervals when necessary (2022).

- The FSC's creation and administration of 27 choirmaster schools in the regions, where talented children could be educated in folk music for free by local choir masters (who themselves were trained for free in post-secondary institutions in Tbilisi).

It is clear from the videos posted on the FSC's website and Facebook page, or the list of participants in the National Folklore Festival, that folk music activity has increased and become more popular in the regions. At the same time, the FSC continues to do village field work, searching for rural singers and dancers who may exhibit new songs or variants. The combination of all these activities inspired the rural population to continue musical folk traditions, though the original contexts are no longer existent.

Musical Form and Social Function

It is important to understand that the success of this popularization and these local revivals could not have occurred without understanding the nature of Georgian polyphony – both its musical form and its social function. The traditional music of Georgia comes in a variety of genres and regional styles: from a simple two-part drone accompaniment to complex three-part forms that may feature intricate counterpoint (in the western plains of Guria for example), thick dense chordal movement (in the south-west mountains of Svaneti), or elaborate harmonized melismatic lines accompanied by a drone-styled bass (in the eastern regions of Kartli and Kakheti). The practice, however varied and diverse, is united by its polyphonic structure. Furthermore, the limited baritone-tenor range of the music and its modal structure often result in a harmonic development and dissonance difficult to define in Western musical terms, and these close harmonies often create a unique, visceral, corporeal experience that is definitive of Georgian polyphony.

However, staged performances are not an appreciable way to experience Georgian songs. The songs become even more meaningful when this visceral embodiment experienced in their performance is coupled with the complex interdisciplinary experience of the *supra*, or some similar social context. A *supra* is a Georgian feasting and toasting tradition that is more than the exceptional culinary sensations of Georgian cuisine and the uplifting experiences of drinking Georgian wine. Being mediated through a series of elaborate toasts, which involves eloquent rhetoric surrounding a series of humane subjects, the *supra* also fosters profound feelings of well being, collective reflection, and social cohesion. So when Dr. Rebecca Stewart, a specialist in medieval music, and the leader of Schola Cantorum Brabantiae of the Netherlands, asked for a Georgian singing workshop during her choir's visit to the Second International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony in 2004, rather than teach songs and lyrics in a semi-formalized setting, members of the Anchiskhati and Zedashe ensembles organized a small *supra*, where the Dutch singers became intimately involved with the tradition of singing, feasting, and toasting that resulted in profound memories of and gratefulness for Georgia's warmth and hospitality. John Graham clearly expressed the secondary nature of performance when he said in his blog: "One wonders if the concert

were just an excuse for the [after] party [the *supra*], where three times more singing happens than in the concert” (Graham 2004).

The significance is to understand that while concerts, festivals, and formal presentations of songs are goal markers that help define the musical product and set objectives for practitioners, the true aspect of this tradition exists in the social practice. Ethnomusicologist Caroline Bithell identifies these differences as the cultural capital versus the social capital (also noting similarities with the meaning of Thomas Turino’s terms “presentational performance” versus “participatory performance”) (Bithell 2016; Turino 2008). Georgian polyphony could not be the protagonist in the domestic and global sense that it is without both this cultural and social capital.

Georgian Polyphony Outside the Homeland

Interestingly, the musical practice of Georgian polyphony is not supported in the same way outside of Georgia. Gurian music scholar Brian Fairley rightly observes a significant international impact from the surge of publications, recordings, and digitization of Georgian polyphony resulting from the UNESCO recognition. Foreigners, like me, eagerly gained access to recordings, transcriptions, and study guides to help enrich our repertoire and Georgian polyphony techniques. This content also became available to researchers and singers who may never have a chance to visit Georgia. While these efforts certainly have raised the status of Georgia in a wider world, interestingly, they have not successfully reached the diaspora – unless you are talking about the “sympathetic diaspora” that revival scholar Caroline Bithell references, i.e., those who are so enamoured and deeply involved in Georgian polyphony that they see Georgia as a “surrogate motherland” and have created “quasi-kinships” with others through the practice and study of Georgian polyphony (2014: 593). As you will see below, a strong and expressive community of such a sympathetic diaspora exists in Toronto. In contrast, the true Georgian diaspora² in Toronto engages very little with traditional Georgian polyphony, though there may be some hopeful signs that this may be changing.

Toronto Georgian Diaspora

The Georgian diaspora in North America is a relatively new phenomenon. Based on the census data collected in 2021, the government of Canada reports 3,305 immigrants from Georgia in Canada, where almost 75% live in Ontario, of which the majority live in Toronto. Prior to 1990, there were fewer than 200 of these Georgian immigrants in Canada. Between 1990 to 2021, the Georgian immigrant population rose steadily (Government of Canada 2022). When I started singing Georgian songs in the mid 1990s, the Toronto Georgian community felt like it was only a handful of people. Despite this, polyphonic Georgian songs were already starting to make a mark on Toronto’s diverse musical multicultural landscape. From the mid 1990s to now, we could say hundreds of Torontonians ventured in and out of choirs, workshops, or special performances featuring Georgian polyphony, with each one likely touched profoundly by the sense of hospitality and comradery that surrounds the discourse and practice of these folk songs.

² This paper uses the terms *true diaspora* or *exclusive diaspora* to represent first generation Georgians, their spouses, and second generation Georgians

Sympathetic Diaspora Practice

The performance of Georgian polyphony in Canada can be traced to the mid 1990s, with the formation of Darbazi by Alan Gasser, member of the American singing groups Kartuli Ensemble and Kavkasia, all of which are dedicated to the performance of only Georgian repertoire. Darbazi started as an ad hoc group of singers interested in Georgian songs, gathering together in Alan's living room once every two weeks to read through transcriptions of Georgian songs originally from the repertoire of Kartuli and Kavkasia. In its second year, the group had already started creating their own transcriptions from recordings and formalized into a more stable choir of about 22 members, none of whom were Georgian. While many had choral experience, about a quarter of them were professional musicians with very good singing skills. The group progressed musically in distinct waves: after their first visit to Georgia in the summer of 1997; after the month-long visit of Anchiskhati in late 1998; through the collaborations with the Rustavi-based ensemble of Hereti in 1999; when Shalva Makharashvili, one of the members of Hereti, joined the group in 2000; and then when he took over the musical leadership in 2003.

From the mid 2000s, the membership stabilized somewhere between ten to twelve singers, all of whom had travelled to Georgia and not only spent time learning unique variants and some techniques from master or expert singers but also experienced the authentic singing culture there. New members who joined at this point forward had experiences with Georgian polyphony either through singing workshops with Georgians (sometimes as song tours in Georgia), through workshops or classes in Toronto (led by Alan Gasser, me, or me and Shalva Makharashvili), or through workshops in the United States, often organized by Village Harmony and led by Carl Linich.

By the late 2000s, up to when Shalva Makharashvili and I left the group in 2013, Darbazi's performances were highly praised for their authentic sound, their performance of diverse regional styles and complex variants, their excellent pronunciation, and their incorporation of round dances into their performances. While everyone was intensely serious about the music, a few significant points can be made to explain the success:

- Makharashvili's remarkable musicianship, inherent ability to authentically sing the variety of regional Georgian styles, and his instinctive musical leadership were most significant in coalescing the group.
- The hundreds of hours I put into analyzing and transcribing songs for my master's thesis helped with repertoire development, choice of variants, as well as my own skill development.
- The inclusion of Vato Katchibaia, another Georgian who not only had a natural powerful Georgian bass tone but could also speak Megrelian, which helped considerably with style and pronunciation.
- The inclusion of dance brought in through Emily Adams' experiences in Georgia was infectious and brought a greater sense of meaning to the music.

I may also add that like so many other Georgian ensembles in Georgia or elsewhere, the social interactions we had and developed – through rehearsals or at parties – were just as significant as the musical ones. In fact, I would say there was a reflexive aspect to this: the better we knew the music, the deeper we got into the discipline, the more fun we had with it in any setting – whether it be in someone's backyard, at a *supra*, on stage, or at the after party. After 2013, Darbazi went through several changes in terms of personnel, and since 2018 has stabilized to a group of five members.

Toronto-based ensembles dedicated to Georgian polyphony that grew out of Darbazi are: ZARI (Shalva Makharashvili, Reid Robins, and Andrea Kuzmich); Machari (once a 10-member choir, now a trio: Alan Gasser, Bie Engelen, Michelangelo Iaffaldano); Megobrebi (a women's choir led by Sam Hirst that was active in the late 2000s), and Ori Shalva, or the Makharashvili family (Shalva Makharashvili, myself, and our two sons - Shalva-Lucas and Gabo). Shalva and I have also led many workshops, usually six weeks in length, which were often asked to perform at community events. While these groups represent mixed levels of skill and performance quality, what is common to them all are the deep and meaningful connections made through the musical practice that not only focused on developing musical production but also resulted in the profound memories of and gratefulness in reenacting the Georgian warmth and hospitality.

True Diaspora Practice

As a mixed Georgian-Canadian-Ukrainian family, Ori Shalva may best be seen as part of Toronto's true Georgian diaspora, though our professionalism and extensive repertoire, reflecting the variety of regional styles, complex polyphonies as well as more popular forms, set us apart. Another mixed family ensemble based in Toronto is called Alilo, also known as the Iremashvili family (Diana Iremashvili, her Uzbeki husband Al Hakimov, and their two sons Mika and Sandro). Diana Iremashvili and her sister Madonna (who just moved back to Georgia but previously lived in New York) have also performed many concerts in Toronto featuring Georgian and Russian romances, including songs like Inola Gurgulia's "Adamiani" and "Chemo Magnolia". While these songs are not of the pure folk tradition that seems to have been the subject of UNESCO inspired revitalization projects, the concerts sometimes featured a few simpler folk songs, as well as other guest singers like Ucha Abuladze, Shalva Chkhaidze, Shalva Makharashvili, or members of the Makharashvili family, who could add to the repertoire. To deepen their knowledge of Georgian songs, Alisher took many of our 6-week Georgian singing workshops (which we led two to three times a year from 2013 to 2021) and the Iremashvilis also hired Shalva a number of times to teach their family folk songs and improve their singing style.

Other significant instances of Georgian polyphony by the diaspora include: the six members of the Rustavi-based ensemble Hereti, which performed at concerts and festivals in the early 2000s; chanting for Toronto's Georgian Orthodox church; Sunday folk singing classes for the children of diaspora at the church; ad hoc groups of singers primarily from the Toronto Georgian Orthodox church community to perform at fundraising concerts for the church; and those who sing at *supras*.

While the non-diaspora singers tended to include a great variety of traditional polyphonic songs, from varying degrees of difficulty, varying degrees of function, and of varying regional styles, the same cannot be said for most of the singers of the diaspora. This, however, was not true in late 1999 and the early 2000s, when Hereti was active. Although their repertoire and sound still represented an older academic school of Georgian polyphony similar to Rustavi, they were incredible singers and had some interesting songs and variants. They did, however, also include some more popular songs, like "Gogoni Shenma Tvaleba", but they still had some unique qualities to their arrangements and performed exceptionally well. Unfortunately, with no strong leadership and their challenges as new immigrant labourers,

they found they had less and less time to commit to singing, and some even moved out of the province.

The Toronto Georgian Orthodox Church created space for the practice of Georgian polyphony through chanting at services, folk song classes for children, and performance opportunities at benefit concerts. While the chanting can be traced to as early as the mid-2000s, it wasn't until 2010, under the spiritual guidance of Mama Pavle Zakaraia, that chanting in earnest started. Chanting at services continues today but there appears to be a lack of clear leadership to retain consistently good singers.

For more than a decade, on and off, the church also hosted folk singing lessons for the kids. At first there were too many kids of too young an age to effectively teach and perform the songs. Now, however, the group consists of only six girl singers, aged 12 to 18. The repertoire still represents more simple polyphonic songs, like "Kesaria" and "Khertlis Naduri". A more challenging song is Paliashvili's "Shen Khar Venakhi"; however, the girls are singing only the two upper voices and the bass is being carried by the teacher, Rezo Durglishvili.

Through benefit concerts, the church also created many more performance opportunities for polyphony. In the earlier years, when Shalva and I were part of Darbazi, that ensemble would often perform. These benefit concerts, some occurring twice a year, also afforded the Makharashvili family many stage opportunities when the kids were still very young³. Diana Iremashvili and her sister also often performed their romances, sometimes including her husband or other singers as basses; or her whole family to sing a folk song.

These church benefits also included an ad hoc group of singers who would organize a few rehearsals and sing a short set of three to five songs. The quality of their singing, however, was inconsistent and depended on the will and availability of individual singers to commit. The upcoming concert on December 11, 2022, looks promising with Shalva Makharashvili, Ramaz Kvirikashvili (former top voice of Hereti), Rezo Durglishvili (former soloist in the Signaghi choir Mravalzhamier), and amateur singer Guram Sekhniashvili. Given that the first three are all well trained and versed in the Kartli-Kakhetian style, they will be performing some complex songs from that region including "Chakrulo".

The repertoire by these ad hoc singers, however, doesn't usually have such complex polyphony. Often the songs stem from the city song repertoire or even popular film songs, where the polyphony uses more parallel thirds between the top two voices and more western harmonic progressions in the bass – like "Chemo Chitunia", "Shen Dagedzeb Dilaa tu Bindia", or "Maghla Tsashi Avprindebi". Occasionally a Megrelian song is performed, like "Chela" or "Vagiorko ma", or some of the composed eastern mountain inspired songs, like "Shenma Survilma". Unless Ori Shalva is present, rarely will you hear the cool dissonances from Svaneti or Guria, or the energy of a *naduri* or an Acharian dance or wedding song. This repertoire is also the same for the many *supras* that take place in restaurants, people's homes, or backyards. The only distinction to make on these occasions, however, is that a number of other singers, some with quite lovely voices, join in. But they tend to all sing the top or leading melody. A lot of the times, the singing is overshadowed by other extraneous noises from the party (especially if it's being held

³ Have a look at the Makharashvili family singing the complex Megrelian song "Delivo Deliasa" in 2014 when Gabo was only 8 years old at a benefit concert for the Toronto Orthodox Church. <https://www.facebook.com/giga.tadiashvili/videos/10152814124936639/>

in a restaurant) or by a bit too much to drink, which impacts the quality of singing. But there are still other times when the singing is quite moving.

There were and continue to be other performance opportunities for Georgian polyphony, but these rarely include the true Georgian diaspora. Besides church benefit concerts, many performance opportunities arose from self-produced concerts by the non-diaspora community or the Iremashvili family, and occasionally Ori Shalva. Other performance opportunities, primarily for the non-diaspora and Ori Shalva, come from local festivals, concert series, and collaborations with well established Toronto choirs, like VIVA Youth Choir, the award-winning Aradia Ensemble, Young Voices of Toronto, and the University of Toronto Vocal Jazz program. There have been a handful of performance opportunities also facilitated by the Georgian Embassy to Canada.

On the Protagonist Role in the Toronto Georgian Diaspora

Returning to the role of UNESCO revitalization projects – and their success in creating digital forms of media to meet the needs of the modern world, which inspired and facilitated so many non-Georgian singers to learn and perform Georgian polyphony in all its complexity and diversity – I have to wonder whether any of these projects can be extended to the Georgian diaspora in Toronto so that more may embrace, learn, and know Georgian polyphony intimately. With a population of less than a few thousand Georgians in Toronto, my report above demonstrates the presence of a fair share of good singers. But the question of how and what form of polyphony they will pass on to the next generation of Georgian diaspora must be asked.

It would seem that the non-Georgians have been able to benefit from the homeland's revitalization efforts which, if using Bithell's terminology, provide for the "cultural capital". Their social experiences in Georgia, with Georgian singers, and/or with Georgia's renowned hospitality have successfully equipped them with the "social capital" (Bithell, 2018)⁴. The combination of which allows for healthy and thriving practices of Georgian polyphony in the various groups and events that take place.

The same, however, does not seem to be true for the Georgian diaspora. The Georgian Church, by my accounts above, seems to be laying the foundation to popularize and create a space for polyphony, but has it been successful enough to make polyphony the protagonist in the Georgian diaspora? And is it successful in targeting all the Georgian diaspora? Or working beyond the limits of the Christian Orthodox reach? What of all the Georgians in Toronto who never go to church⁵? Or maybe Georgians of non-Christian faith?

Unfortunately, there are too few Georgians like Shalva Makharashvili, who, since coming to Toronto in 1999 when he was only 21 years old learned how to play traditional instruments (*chuniri*, *chonguri*, and *changi*); learned regional styles of singing and songs that he was unaware of in Georgia; and facili-

⁴ According to Bithell, the term "cultural capital" focuses more on the musical product rather than the process. As product, the music meets certain conservative, somewhat measurable qualities (appropriate repertoire, tuning, voice distribution, variation/improvisation, etc) that focus on what the music is and not how it is created. Music as "social capital", however, recognizes the deeply social, participatory and interdisciplinary processes of music making. (Also see Thomas Turino's terms "presentational performance" and "participatory performance" (2008).)

⁵ It should be noted that the location of the church is quite far from where many Georgians live.

tated the accessibility of Georgian polyphony to so many others through musical performance (on stage but also at so many *supras*), leadership, workshops, and his infectious and genuine deep love for the culture. Thus, I question whether the Georgia ministry of culture and/or the Folklore State Centre can extend the revitalization efforts into its diaspora so that policies for the post-revival of Georgian polyphony target more of these remote Georgian communities. Perhaps they could initiate a diaspora form of the National Folklore Festival; establish cultural community centres and/or choirmaster schools; create festivals and possible exchanges with other Georgian cultural bearers. Whatever way it is done, it will be important, however, to remember that both the cultural and social capital are needed for the longevity of the practice.

Ukraine

While traditional vocal polyphony is the protagonist in Georgia, until very recently for Ukrainians, their mass of polyphonic songs has remained deeply unnoticed and obscured in the village life of rural Ukraine. In comparison, with the Ukrainian diaspora in Toronto dating to the 1800s and being at least 70 times the size of the Toronto Georgian diaspora, Toronto Ukrainians have established an incredible cultural infrastructure. Interestingly, the singing of Ukrainian polyphonic songs is practiced by a small, fringe community, somewhat in contest with this cultural infrastructure.

Ukraine has a massive landmass, representing the second largest country in Europe. Like Georgia, it too has been and continues to be the subject of invasions by competing larger powers; and the subject of fighting, surviving, and dying from enemies is retold over and over again in the lyrics of innumerable folk songs. Kyivan Rus, founded in the 9th century and adopting Christianity in the 10th, is reported to be the origins of all other East Slavic culture. With its historic European associations, it is also identified as distinct from the cultural, socio-political, and economic development of Russia. Indeed, with the 2022 Russian war with Ukraine, this distinction is ever more emphasized by Ukrainians, reminding the world of their subjugation since the mid-17th century by Russian colonizers and then the Soviet regime. Ukrainian folklore and costumes are rich with pre-Christian motifs and symbols that revere the natural elements (earth, water, sun, grain, fertility of the soil, honey, etc.) and are believed to be thousands of years old. Its rich and long musical history, “captures the reality of Ukraine as a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional, multi-linguistic space” (Sonevytsky 2022). That being said, Christianity remains a dominant belief for Ukrainians; however, there is a significant syncretic nature in its practice with so many layers of pagan beliefs surviving in their holiday customs and practices.

Ukraine Polyphonic Practice in the Homeland⁶

As suggested above, the musical landscape of Ukraine, like the country itself, is massive and diverse. It is impossible for me to adequately address it all here. Instead, I will focus on the subject of this paper, vocal polyphony, which is marked by two somewhat discrepant characteristics: its vastness and obscurity.

⁶ The next section includes excerpts from Kuzmich (forthcoming).

Its Vastness and Character

The vastness of Ukrainian polyphony is clearly demonstrated through the Polyphony Project (www.polyphonyproject.com), the largest online archive of traditional Ukrainian songs. Started only in 2014, it now hosts over 2000 songs from eleven ethnographic regions, with excellent audio and video recording quality, and online multitracked control so you can hear each part separately. The database is state of the art and allows fast searches by lyrics, genre, location, ethnographic region, theme subjects, etc.

Through the songs in the database, one can hear the variety of polyphonic forms in Ukraine, such as: the three and four-part songs with powerful harmonies and lyrical lines from the Central region; the use of heterophony, drone and smaller modes with the dissonant two and three-part harmonies in ritual songs from Polissia; the clustered harmonies resulting from unusual modes and voice crossings in the Eastern part of Ukraine; the interesting use of contrastive harmony in some two-part songs; the use of parallel thirds in some wedding and harvest tunes; or the monophonic character of songs from the west. Some examples also demonstrate the sublimely bright vocal timbre from Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Sumy in contrast to the darker timbre heard in Poltava.

Indisputably, the Polyphony Project as a resource and accompanying concert series, has been instrumental in popularizing this musical form throughout Europe, as is evidenced by the sold-out concert halls packed mostly with young people (Bachynska 2019).

Its Obscurity

What is really shocking about the vastness of traditional Ukrainian polyphony is its obscurity. I had no idea of the richness of this music until 2013, when I attended a local folk-arts community workshop in Toronto – and I am not only of Ukrainian heritage but by that time had been studying and researching Georgian polyphony for over 10 years. Even more shocking, the Polyphony Project and those European concerts (designed to study, preserve, and present Ukrainian folk culture to the world) were not even initiated by Ukrainians but by Miklos Both, a Hungarian musician/ethnographer/producer, who used his own money to fund the project and organized all the ethnographic expeditions for the first three years. Now the project is administrated by a host of Ukrainian ethnomusicologists and funded by Hungarian and Ukrainian arts organizations, as well as the EU Creative European Program. Yet it remains curious as to why such significant cultural expressions should have not been recognized sooner, especially since similar unique cultures in the rural communities all across Europe have disappeared (Kiptenko 2019).

While there have been local ethnomusicologists conducting field work, collecting these polyphonic songs, and creating urban-based ethnographic singing ensembles since the 1960s, this vocal tradition and the knowledge around it has been limited to an insular network of Ukrainian singers and scholars. It may even argue that the vocal polyphony in Ukraine has been systematically undermined. According to Joseph Jordania, Ukrainian ethnomusicologists displayed a total neglect for their own polyphonic traditions (2006: 68–69). Even today, if you search for “polyphony” or “folk choir” on Ukrainian media sites, there are very few results.

Of course, all Ukrainian culture, like many local cultures in Eastern Europe and parts of Central Asia, was repressed by Russian colonization and then Sovietization. The question of why Ukrainian vocal po-

lyphony has been undermined is itself a vast undertaking that I'm not able to do justice to here, but some insight may be gained by considering some possible parallels with Lara Pellegrinelli's arguments for why singers have been omitted from jazz historiography. In jazz discourse, singers are limited to only a "precursor" of jazz because the voice, associated with the body, is seen as untrained and emotional, as the folk, the vernacular. And in gender and cultural studies, these are typically the qualities associated with the female. This is in contrast with the instrument, which is associated with the male due to its technical demands, intellect, and skills required for conquering it and mastering it. These features thus legitimize instrumental jazz in a Western cultural sense and further play into all sorts of colonialist tropes told through the "birthing" and "great man" "genius" histories of jazz, which is part of the process of acquiring the cultural capital that turned jazz into an art music (Pellegrinelli 2008). So Western colonial values around music – which shunned Ukrainian vocal polyphony and prized the genius character of some instrumental or more developed melodic and lyrical songs – were so deeply naturalized by Ukrainians in order to legitimize forms of Ukrainian folk music as "art" music. Thus, instrumental music and the *kobzar* tradition (especially with its lyrical use of historical subjects set to song accompanied by the sophisticated *bandura*) are more highly valued than the unintelligible vocables and narrow melodies of old rural Ukrainian women.

The Current State of Polyphony in Ukraine

That being said, there are currently a number of excellent urban based ethnographic ensembles, like Drevo, Bozhychi, Rozhanystya, ShchykaRiba, Dyvyna, among others. And there seems to be a growing network of festivals and workshops that feature these groups, and other ethnographic ensembles with the aim to popularize and facilitate transmission of the old songs, dances, and instrumental music. But if we compare the number of these groups next to the Georgian ones, they are so dramatically fewer. On the other hand, the folk ethos (including vocal polyphony) has found a powerful outlet through popular music. Since the 1990s, and especially since the 2014 Revolution of Dignity, the reconstruction of old folk songs into more popular forms, or the use of folk motifs and instrumentation to create new songs has become so trendy "it would seem every second Ukrainian band tries to employ some folk element" (Bohdan 2021)⁷. Through the international success of fusion bands like Dakha Brakha, Go A, or the Toronto-based Balaklava Blues, Ukrainian folk polyphony – without the supporting infrastructure of UNESCO revitalization projects – has made its way into the global imagination. This, however, doesn't explain how the singing of Ukrainian polyphonic songs made its way into the Toronto Ukrainian diaspora.

Ukrainian Polyphony Outside the Homeland

Toronto Diaspora and Ukrainian Culture

Within the Canadian diaspora, there are varying degrees of Ukrainianess. As a third generation Canadian-Ukrainian to rural uneducated grandparents who immigrated in the late 1920s, the Ukrainian culture I inherited was a very muted expression. The closest I came to folk was listening to Trio Marenych, which featured beautiful Ukrainian melodies sung by the perfect academic blend of two female voices

⁷ For more on folk forms in Ukrainian popular music see (Sonevytsky 2019).

and a bass, accompanied by guitar. In comparison, my friends who are third generation Ukrainians from grandparents who were business professionals and intellectuals that immigrated in the 1940s and 50s, all speak Ukrainian, went to Ukrainian schools and summer camps, and were part of a highly functioning, insular community of Ukrainians who were conscientiously institutionalizing the distinctness of their culture (Baczynskyj 2009; Sonevytsky 2019: X–XI).

Many folk elements survived and circulated in this diaspora. Major calendar events, like *Koliada* (Christmas caroling), *Malanka* (New Years), *Haivky* (spring), *Ivana Kupalo* (summer solstice), and other events and rituals were celebrated, but arguably, were still muted. For example, pagan folk elements – like the cross-dressing *Malanka* stage-show character for the Ukrainian New Year “super” dance that occurs in banquet halls (Klymasz 1985), or fortune telling and eccentric performances of forest nymphs covered in “ooga booga” mud for *Ivana Kupalo* at youth camps – survived in a somewhat diluted way, often divorced from any meaning other than being entertaining, performative, and identifying as something distinctly Ukrainian (O. Kleban 2016; Klymasz 1985).

The Kosa Kolektiv Community and Polyphonic Ukrainian Songs

But the singers of Ukrainian vocal polyphony in Toronto - who don't all have Ukrainian heritage – did not come from either of these diaspora communities. They came through a singing practice in Canada that started around 2011, with the development of Kosa Kolektiv (Kosa), a Ukrainian-Canadian initiated, folk-arts-based multicultural community in Toronto. Three of the four founding members of Kosa are third generation immigrants that grew up in this insular community, and the creation of Kosa was in part a reaction to the insular nature of their diaspora's Ukrainianess.

The singing practice more specifically can be traced to one of those 4 founding members, Bozhena Hrycyna, who brought back this desire to sing from her experiences in Ukraine in 2009. She has trouble explaining why she wanted to sing or share her desire to sing, but doing so went hand in hand with other folk forms that Kosa was active in (crafting, canning, cooking, egg decorating, embroidery, etc.) and helped connect her to a revival of “authentic” folk, which at times distanced her from her Ukrainian-Canadian inheritances that “suddenly [and sometimes painfully] seemed “hokey” or contrived” (Hrycyna 2016)⁸.

The polyphonic singing, which started in 2011, involved workshops and singing nights to help develop repertoire and the authentic vocal style, known in Toronto as *ridnyj holos*. This translates into “native voice”, and involves the use of a loud chest voice with a bright timbre; appropriate inflections and phrasing; the use of ornaments, yips, and hollers; and the use of improvisation and variation. Songs were learned through recordings and by visiting artists, such as Maria Sonevytsky, Nadia Tarnawsky, members of Dakha Brakha or Rozhanystia, and ethnomusicologist and founding member of Bozhychi, Marichka Marczyk (aka Maria Kudriavsteva).

Most importantly, singing for Kosa was never organized for the stage like the diaspora choirs and dance groups they grew up with. Singing was meant to be part of a larger interdisciplinary community experience, where dressing in costumes, displaying or partaking in crafts, storytelling, games, ritual, and

⁸ For similar accounts with respect to Ukrainian-American heritage in the Northeastern United States, see Sonevytsky (2019: X–XI)

dance enhanced and heightened the experience and meaning of singing⁹. And singing, like the other folk crafts they practiced, studied, or facilitated, were the power source of this community because they could reach people without the use of words. Through these creative activities, intentions were pure; the insularity of their Ukrainian-Canadian inheritances were erased; and their sense of authenticity was restored.

Of course, it wasn't all unicorns and rainbows. The community did not function in some beautifully homogenized unified way. For example, there were a variety of skill levels in the group that at times made it challenging to execute the power of Ukrainian polyphonic songs adequately. But there also emerged some singers with more drive and skill, who explored the tradition deeper through practice, research, and transcriptions, and/or studied with folk experts. Different subgroups formed and reformed, centering around different activities and events. One of the most interesting and recent developments to emerge from Kosa's polyphonic practice is how members of this community – of varying ethnic backgrounds – rallied so quickly and efficiently in response to the Russian attacks on Ukraine, and created an incredibly effective singing group that was able to use the strident and powerful polyphonic songs of ancient Ukraine to help fight the war on Russia¹⁰.

Conclusion

This paper has reviewed two very different circumstances surrounding the practice of traditional vocal polyphony by diaspora populations in Toronto. Georgian polyphony in the homeland has been touted as a symbol of Georgianness, with scholars pointing to its reference in historical texts that date back over a thousand years. Since UNESCO declared it an intangible heritage of humanity, the country established a complex infrastructure of policies and programs to regulate its practice and help popularize and reinvigorate the musical form. While this infrastructure helps define the product of the cultural expression (e.g., a list of musical characteristics concerning part allocation, song variants, repertoire, etc.) and makes opportunities for its performance, the increase of these musical activities in the regions and their continued practice in Tbilisi only occurs because the music is also experienced as part of a larger cultural expression that fosters deep social connections. Both of these aspects of the musical practice seem to have crossed over the Atlantic Ocean into Toronto, except that most of the practitioners of Georgian polyphony – in their attempts to significantly encompass the regional and stylistic depths of the musical tradition – are primarily of non-Georgian origin. While there are many instances of harmony singing in the exclusive Georgian diaspora of Toronto, there appears to be a lack of infrastructural support that exists in the homeland to keep Toronto Georgians singing the traditional polyphonic songs they already know, never mind transmitting them to the next generation.

In comparison, Toronto Ukrainians have a significant history, large population, and a complex infrastructure of new Ukrainian-Canadian institutions to help solidify a distinct Ukrainian-Canadian identity. They have been very clever, creating jobs, organizations, events, museums, newspapers, camps – a

⁹ For a sense of how these storytellings, games, rituals, and dances are enacted by Kosa - and for a sense of the multicultural makeup of Kosa Kolektiv's community events, see this edited clip of their 2015 Haivky Festival held in Toronto https://youtu.be/femt-3_v2Qo.

¹⁰ See Kuzmich (forthcoming) for a detailed account of how this occurred. For examples of other developments in the group and how unique Toronto variants formed in the singing of traditional polyphony see Kuzmich (2018).

whole economy around the preservation of their Ukrainian traditions and cultural forms. But singing the old baba polyphonic songs exists on the periphery of this community, in a zone occupied by Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians responding to something felt as more powerful and authentic. And through Kosa Kolektiv's vision, songs are learned and shared in a way where they are experienced as part of a larger cultural expression, that not only fosters deep social connections, but also gives the singers agency to create, nurture and mobilize.

One last observation worth noting concerns the importance of this deep social connection in each of the musical practices. For Georgian polyphony, it would seem that the establishment of these deep social connections has been imported from the homeland through the *supra* tradition. For the practice of polyphonic Ukrainian songs, these connections seem to have been unearthed through storytelling, games, rituals, and dances that stem from older layers of Ukrainian folklore, muted remnants of which survived only in contemporary diaspora practices.

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THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN THE GEORGIAN DIASPORA'S ETHNIC IDENTITY PRESERVATION
(PER EXAMPLES OF DIASPORAS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION, GREAT BRITAIN, USA, AND CANADA)

Key Words: traditional music, migration, labor diasporas, ethnic identity, multiculturalism

Introduction

The role of traditional music in the process of emigrants preserving an ethnic identity is a pertinent topic in modern ethnomusicology. This issue is connected to massive emigration at the beginning of the 1990s. The same migratory processes are also perceptible in Georgia.

It is difficult to single out the sole factor contributing to emigration and/or immigration from/to Georgia. Rather, these are various complex factors ranging from economic and societal to political and personal level (2017 MPG: 10)¹. According to Georgia's 2021 migration profile data, the emigration processes since 2004 have become even more diverse in light of motivations and destination countries².

An idea from the early 1990s that culture is connected to specific territories or places is under scrutiny due to growing interest in the mobility of culture forms (Clifford, 1992). The focus on migrants has produced a need for new studies about migration and culture (Bottomley, 1992; Chambers, 1994; Lavie and Swedenburg, 1996).

Alan Merriam definition of the ethnomusicology as "the study of music in a culture", and not as a study of "non-Western" music (Merriam, 1964) "gave a new importance to understanding processes of acculturation and musical change and, perhaps one could say, a new recognition of the importance of migration in the generation of new musics" (Bailey & Collyer, 2006: 169).

The framework of the traditional view studying original music within a specific cultural and geographical space has been expanded through the mobility of the Georgian population.

Focusing on the role of traditional music in preserving an identity within the Georgian diaspora gives rise to the following questions: **What importance does ethnic music have for emigrants in the process of globalization, deterritorialization, and transnational migration? What role does it fulfill in transmitting an ethnic identity?**

The questions are pertinent within a context of discussing not just local, but also global migration and transcultural trends.

¹ https://migration.commission.ge/files/migration_profile_2017_eng_final_.pdf (link accessed: 27. 10. 2022) https://migration.commission.ge/files/mp19_eng_web3.pdf (link accessed: 27. 10. 2022)

² https://migration.commission.ge/files/mmp21_eng_web3c.pdf (link accessed: 27. 10. 2022)

Since foreign migration issues have not yet become subjects of research in Georgian ethnomusicology, this work is a first attempt at posing the question. The study is based on data obtained as the result of my surveying of Georgian Orthodox parishes abroad and traditional music teachers at cultural centers. It is also founded on modern studies devoted to this topic.

The Positioning of Traditional Music in Diaspora Institutions

In the years 2015–2019, I coordinated Georgian Orthodox parish projects between the Chant University and European Union countries, through which Georgian emigrants had the means of learning traditional Georgian chant, folk songs, and traditional instruments at their new settlement location³.

Out of the diaspora institutes, Georgia's Orthodox parishes fulfill an important role in the formation of Georgian associations bringing together diaspora societies having to cope with a difficult way of life. All the parishes of the aforementioned countries greatly support the practice of teaching ethnic music. Chant and folk music choirs for all generations are founded by them. Here, traditional music is more popular, "more democratic and more far-reaching in consumption" (Bailey & Collyer, 2006: 168).

Why are parishes dominant in forming Georgian associations and defining their cultural lives?

Georgian Orthodoxy is not only a religious, but also a dominant marker of ethnic identity, the function of which has grown even more beyond the country's borders. In itself, religious practice implies the stability and systematicity of carrying out the practice demanded of its followers. An emigrant's heavy and overloaded work schedule provides for only one day (Sunday) to rest. Attending Sunday services is in fact the only social activity provided to them by their way of life.

The parish is a place where emigrants and their children can get free educational and psychological services. For children and young people in parish schools, the lesson schedule has been set up as such that while the parents are at a service, the children are attending lessons. As far as parishes are mostly in capitals or large cities, this schedule is especially convenient for emigrants living on the periphery, those who have to travel 1–2 hours to take their child to the center of their sole Georgian education.

The coexistence of an educational center with a religious institution has its own limitations along with some advantages. Internal and external cultural politics are mostly governed for the parish by the pastor. Some of them function in a more withdrawn and isolated manner, while others are open and actively involved with local religious or cultural institutions.

Lidskog notes that diaspora awareness is simultaneously a resource and a limitation in the social positioning and orientations of groups, and is therefore reflected on the future (Lidskog, 2017: 32).

If we look at the experiences of diasporas with extensive histories of migration, the more robust a cultural association is in a material sense, the more independent cultural and educational centers appear. This phase has newly started in young Georgian diasporas.

³ Data for Diaspora Projects Implemented by the Chant University: 2015–2019 – Bari, Florence, Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp.

The Role of Traditional Music in the Formation of a Collective Memory

Music has been one of the basic links filling out the spatial and cultural distances between the new place of residence and the homeland in Georgian diasporas (primarily labor) formed over the last two decades.

According to Lomax, “the primary effect of music is to give the listener a feeling of security, for it symbolizes the place where he was born, his earliest childhood satisfactions, his religious experience, his pleasure in community doings, his courtship and his work/any or all of these personality shaping experiences” (Lomax, 1959: 929)

It is shown through the 20–30-year musical experience of Georgian diaspora communities, that the formation, preservation, and protection of Georgian emigrants’ collective memory takes place through traditional music. Even more, traditional music plays an important role in handing down a specific identity from one generation of emigrants to the next not having experienced their parents’ homeland (Klein, 2005).

For most bilingual emigrants of the second generation, Georgian is a secondary language. To them, learning traditional Georgian music has a musical, as well as linguistic function (the latter will be discussed in detail later).

This topic is quite pertinent, because now the Georgian diaspora is entering the second-generation phase. When discussing forms of transmission to the second generation, “Klein uses the concept *re-mem-bering*, which underscores that it is not an abstract collective memory that is maintained, but instead it is particular persons (group members) who remember. It is a challenge to pass this collective memory on to younger generations, and Klein finds that cultural performance provided a means to enact identity and collective experience through stories of displacement and relocation” (Lidskog 2017: 32).

One of the challenges of the modern, global world is transmitting this collective memory to younger generations, which takes place not within a traditional environment, but a completely new and foreign one. Klein considers cultural performance to ensure the activation of identity and collective experience through stories of relocation and changing places (Klein: 2005).

Lidskog notes that “this process is not a simple reproduction of collective identity; instead, younger generations (who relate both to their parents’ ethnic identities and to the dominant culture) dynamically negotiate their fixed identity and history, which often leads to changed ethnic identities” (Lidskog, 2017: 32).

In comparison to the old type of migration where one ethnic group is mostly settled in a compact area and has minimal communication with the dominant ethnoses, in today’s migratory conditions, identity changes are taking place at a hastened speed, which is clearly reflected in the second generation.

Modern-day reality gives rise to the need for mental and physical spaces where members share in a diaspora awareness. In Lidskog’s opinion, traditional music provides the means for creating this type of space for preserving a collective identity. Still, this is not a simple process of transmission during which members passively absorb a collective identity, instead this is an interactive process in which many sources are used in forming a collective identity (Lidskog, 2017: 32).

Forms of Modern Identities

There are currently two basic concepts presented within the psychological approach to migration – assimilation and multiculturalism (within their own historical contexts).

Incorporation/assimilation is founded on the principle of similarities among groups, whereas **multiculturalism** is on the principle of differences among groups, still, the challenges of modern society place both questions under a question mark.

“Contemporary migrant identities combine cultural origins in different ways and thus give rise to new and complex identities, described as **multiple, mixed, hybrid or hyphenated** identities” (Green & Staerklé, 2013: 9).

Exactly such complex identities as these take shape among emigrant children and youth of the second generation, which are first dependent on whether a family is mono or multiethnic, a parent's adaptation strategy with the new environment, the local educational system, and an individual's personal choice upon reaching maturity regarding what and how much they retain from their parents' collective memory. Most of the second generation within Georgian diasporas has still not reached adulthood, therefore this topic requires future study.

The Makharashvili-Kuzmich family from Toronto (Canada) is a fascinating example of a **hyphenated** identity, where the father Shalva Makharashvili and mother – Andrea Kuzmich (of Ukrainian heritage) perform Georgian folk songs along with their children Luka and Gabo. Andrea's everyday life is a mixture of both Ukrainian and Georgian musical practices. Upon being asked how her children maintain balance between these two ethnic identities and practices, Andrea responded that the Georgian one is dominant, and she thinks that her being a performer of Georgian songs played a large role in this (personal interview with Andrea Kuzmich; video ex. 1).

The Interrelationship of Musical Language and Speech

When examining this topic, I relied upon the experiences of the following teachers/parents: Maia Shioshvili (USA), Andrea Kuzmich (Canada), Tamar Vepkhvadze (Great Britain), Eka Kacharava (Italy). As well as on information supplied by teacher participating in Georgian Orthodox parish projects between the Chant University and European countries in the years 2015–2019.

According to information obtained during the interviews, traditional music became the leading means of passing down an ethnic identity for children of first-generation emigrants who rarely have fluent mastery of the Georgian language. It also greatly facilitates the development of linguistic skills. Children who have a mastery of Georgian music have better achievements in learning the Georgian language.

It must be noted that transmission of the Georgian language as a native, primary language has reduced significantly in 21st-century emigrants of the second generation, in comparison to those from the 19th–20th centuries. This is a case when the native language as a dominant marker of identity and basic means of communication loses some priority in relation to the official language of the new settlement.

It has been shown by recent data that the ethnic musical language has gained an advantage out of the communication forms in such circumstances. This is yet another essential topic of research needing to be studied in the future together with Georgian linguists.

I asked my respondents, as parents and teachers, the following question: **Why do emigrant children have an easier time learning Georgian singing than the Georgian language?**

Despite the active support of state institutions, to this day there are no effective methods, learning resources, and online platforms for teaching the Georgian language in Georgian émigré associations. The most elementary stage of teaching primarily occurs using Jacob Gogebashvili's *Deda Ena (The Mother Tongue)*. Lessons are only held once a week on Sunday, which is clearly not enough.

Not all diaspora societies have professional teachers; they do not possess an appropriate learning space and resources helping make teaching effective and a positive experience for students. Having, or not having all these components, however, either increases or decreases a child's motivation.

In what sort of conditions are children in the diasporas taught traditional music?

Before I begin discussing the teachers' experiences, I want to briefly touch upon **the formal and informal approaches of teaching/learning** traditional music.

In his book *Experiencing Ethnomusicology; Teaching and Learning in European Universities* Simon Krüger splits the learning and performance of folklore music into 4 phases when discussing them (Krüger, 2009: 113):

- Discovering Musical Culture
- Discovering Expression and Form
- Experiencing Emotion
- Discovering Value

In the old days, when a performer's "melosphere" (melodic world (trans.) – Zemtsovsky) was saturated with only one type of music (their own traditional music), these 4 phases were inseparable from each other in the performer's musical awareness. She only lived in this musical culture, spending every day mastering its forms and methods of expression. Her musical emotions are only connected to this, and therefore, it was this culture that represented her only thing of musical value (Zhuzhunadze, 2017). In the modern urban and global reality, the *melosphere* has also become multi and effective. An individual has a plethora of choices as to which musical practice to pursue. In relation to children, the choice is mostly made by the parents, in adulthood, however, this practice is only continued by those for whom this music has become a personal value.

As for the forms of teaching traditional music to children, dominant today in modern Georgian reality is formal teaching. Teaching has ended up in most cases within a strictly organized learning space and system, the process is hegemonically formal and controlled. During this type of teaching/learning, only the beginning 2 phases out of the 4 previously mentioned are emphasized.

A need to work up some new models of teaching and cultural strategies arises when discussing teaching/learning forms in modern studies, which when being transmitted does not make young people acquire complexes, instead it turns this music into a form of their self-expression, teaches them to master their own voice, body, and emotions. In summary, however, it transforms this music into their main musical value (Peycheva, 2010; Spajic, 2016).

In this aspect, the Mtiebi Ethnomusic Theater and the children's studio Amer-Imeri associated with it founded by Edisher Garakanidze, had, and still have the most correct approach. Folklore works retain

their syncretic nature through their performances. They not only learn songs for the stage, but also take them back to the village. We remember many folk rituals revived by them in the village, whether this be Alilo, Chona, or Lipanali.

These approaches established by Edisher Garakanidze have many followers in diaspora communities. The previously mentioned pedagogues consider the Amer-Imeri method to be the best model, which covers all 4 phases mentioned by Krüger above.

Tamar Vepkhvadze remarks that she has specially studied the studies associated with E. Garakanidze's performance art and is in active communication with the current teachers at Amer-Imeri. Her main goal in the teaching process is to create a maximally open and carefree environment for the kids, for them to revive calendrical rituals in their new place of settlement (video ex. 2).

Maia Shioshvili recognizes that the lesson process must be as positive as possible so the kids can acquire some emotional pleasure from singing and being together. Both parents in the Chkuaseli-Shioshvili household are professional musicians and the children are continuing the family's musical tradition (video ex. 3).

Eka Kacharava, who is a parent and pedagogue like the previous 3 interviewees, considers from personal experience that a Georgian awareness within a child is either formed completely, or on the contrary, purged through the adaptation strategy chosen by the parent. Only those people wishing to preserve their children's ethnic roots come to Sunday school (video ex. 4).

At the end of this subchapter, I want to briefly touch upon **singing repertoire**.

My correspondents note that their teaching repertoire does not solely consist of folklore works. Elementary studies are made much easier from the start for children raised on the western musical system through urban folklore and stage works. Parents and diaspora societies themselves especially request songs of the patriotic genre for events. The learning of chant works is the most difficult challenge due to their musical complexity. But since most circles exist with a parish and the children participate in Sunday services, learning the litanies and simple mode works is a priority.

What challenges do diaspora teachers of traditional music have?

In contrast to the folklore circles active in Georgia, where kids are selected and grouped according to their musical proficiencies, here everyone who has the desire to sing is accepted. Due to a dearth of students, they frequently cannot be grouped according to their proficiencies and ages. There is only one lesson a week. As far as most children do not have full mastery of the Georgian language, assimilating a verbal text requires more time. To describe a song's genre or ritual function, the teacher chooses to speak in the local language well understood by the students. There are some systematic attendance problems due to living in distant locations.

Teaching and performing instrumental music are topics for separate discussion. Here, the task is complicated by a lack of instruments. The Georgian Chanting Foundation's initiative that freely donated some traditional Georgian instruments to St. Nino's parish in Florence in 2018 and sent their teacher there from Georgia for three months is to be saluted.

It must be pointed out that chromatic instruments enjoy more popularity in diaspora communities than traditional instruments.

The Role of Traditional Music Practice in the Lives of Adults

Rice notes that, “An important part of all identity formation is the making of boundaries; music can be used to draw boundaries between groups, thereby shaping and strengthening social identities” (Rice, 2013: 72; Lidskog, 2017: 25)

The main dilemma of Georgian emigrants united within a diaspora community is that they are physically in one place (where they live and work) and mentally somewhere else (which they regularly think about and lack). Through traditional music, the spatial distance between them and the homeland is bridged somewhat.

Regarding Vietnamese living in the USA, Reyes writes: “They never try coming up with something new, because they are trying to preserve a living memory of home and perform the same song over and over.” (Reyes, 1999: 143)

The same can be said of Georgian emigrants. At events supporting diaspora communities, even famous pop performers of Georgian origin mostly exchange their own modern repertoire and stage image for Georgian tradition.

I will cite Katie Melua as an example, who is an active supporter of the London diaspora. Her success story is exemplary and gives great motivation to the kids and youth (video ex. 5).

Distinguished by international success found in recent years is the singer Natia Todua, who in 2017 won the popular music show “Voice of Germany 2017”. Natia is currently busy in Berlin. She is also actively involved in diaspora events and performs folk songs (video ex. 6).

Professional musicians’ financial income was noticeably reduced the world over, and clearly in Georgia as well, through the pandemic conditions of Covid-19 and the completely interrupted stage and tour life. An accompanying process of this crisis in the years 2021–2022 is the growing dynamics in the flow of folklore singers emigrating out of Georgia. This affected such state ensembles as Basiani, Rustavi, and Erisioni. Performance in emigration is no longer their primary line of work, it has only remained as a function for additional income.

Per previously examined examples, we can discuss the issue of music politics and its role in the process of establishing a position as an individual or ethnic community within a new society. I asked musical event organizers surveyed by me a question: What is the main goal of their event?

Every one of them had the same response: the first one is to gather society members and bring them together. They note that music has important unifying properties. The second goal is to restore the social status of Georgian emigrants in relation to their own ethnos, as well as to the dominant host ethnos. In summary, however, it is the formation of a positive conceptualization of an ethnic identity.

Georgian migrants experience separation from home in many various ways. “The Georgian migrants suffer in various ways from the separation from home. “They are robbed of much of their dignity, are impoverished, live on welfare or have to take on poorly-paid and low-status jobs. They suffer a loss of self-esteem and self-identity, of experiencing oneself as a valuable human being” (Baily & Collyer, 2006: 178).

The practice of traditional music and performing it publicly on stage greatly assists them in reaffirming their own identity and in reevaluating the identities of their employers and coworkers.

Having been discussed above, these issues are also associated with a therapeutic function of music largely determining the mental health of migrants and taking on a group therapy role.

Gender

An important sphere for future studies is researching the gender aspects of Georgian emigrants. According to migration profile data from the years 2017–2021, the migration indicator of women from Georgia is quite high. Over the last 25 years, Georgian women have become the main, and oftentimes, sole providers of large families.

Georgian emigrant women play a dominant role in forming diaspora communities and in retaining and strengthening ties to the homeland. The number of women occupied in practicing traditional music exceeds that of the men. This is demonstrated most clearly in the church singing practice. Significant contributions have been made by Georgian women over the past 25 years in restoring the Georgian chant tradition in the homeland and abroad.

The responsibility taken on by women in bring Georgian chant back into church services changed the official Church stance regarding the involvement of women in services. Women's role in raising, educating the young generation, and protecting chant is stable and will be a part of the entire history of church chant (Chkheidze, 2022).

This example shows that music not only assists in enculturating gender identities, but it can also run counter to them, as well as to the practice and its mutual deployment.

“Thus, music creates a space that can stabilize and destabilize established gender identities, often both at the same time. An important area for future studies is thus to investigate gendered aspects of the stabilization and transformation of social identities” (Lidskog, 2017: 34)

Foreign Performers of Traditional Georgian Music and the Diaspora

Traditional Georgian music, especially the polyphony, is today quite in demand on the world market as a cultural tourism product. From year to year, more foreigners are developing an interest in studying it. There are many foreign ensembles where the repertoire is only represented by traditional Georgian music. These ensembles are mostly directed by Georgian emigrant musicians. Here, music is a powerful tool for producing a cultural dialogue and social integration. The aforementioned foreigners or emigrants frequently invite Georgian ethnomusicologists and performers to conduct masterclasses and workshops.

Summer camps, mostly taking place in a village space, have become quite popular in recent years. The camps are the best means of introducing one's own country to others, on the other hand, they are materialistically profitable projects providing Georgian emigrant musicians the means of returning to the homeland once a year. In summary, however, they bring people closer together in a cultural sense.

The Georgian Government's Support of Diaspora Societies

A grant program “Supporting Diaspora Initiatives” has been implemented by the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2018 envisioning the assistance of fellow countrymen abroad in the processes of preserving their national identity and cultural originality, developing folk diplomacy, and deepening ties to the homeland.

In 2019, I became the coordinator of two projects and a participant in a third. I kept an active eye on winning projects in the following years as well. This program is really a good means of establishing ties

among diaspora communities scattered about in different countries and forming a joint network. Still, most projects are focused on short-term goals, and I think much needs to be done in the future to come up with long-term projects having solid goals.

Conclusion

It was shown through studying the issue that traditional Georgian music plays a dynamic role in preserving and transmitting an ethnic identity in the Georgian diaspora.

- Traditional music is an important instrument for forming individual or collective self-interpretations.
- For strengthening a group's cultural identity, as well as in overcoming it; for establishing boundaries between groups; for finding one's place in a changed world.
- Traditional music operates on a performative level in Georgian diaspora communities. Here, not only is the past recalled, but is also shaped within the process.
- Music's social and therapeutic functions are put to the forefront in diaspora societies.
- New and complex identities (**multiple, mixed, hybrid or hyphenated**) are generated by the emigrants' multicultural environments, where traditional music is a tool for preserving a connection to ethnic roots.
- The practice of traditional singing is an auxiliary tool in assimilating the language within the complicated process of transmitting the native language among Georgian emigrants.
- Gender changes find a reflection in the alteration and reevaluation of roles between the sexes in musical practice.
- Diaspora communities play an important role in the development and popularization of traditional Georgian music as a product of cultural tourism.
- Support from the Georgian government assists diaspora communities in forming networks.

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Interview with Tamar Vepkhvadze – Founder and pedagogue at Gonieri Art Studio in London (recording date: 22. 09. 2022).

Interview with Andrea Kuzmich – PhD in Philosophy, singer, pedagogue, ethnomusicologist (recording date: 02. 10. 2022).

Please see the QR code for video examples



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**THE PROBLEM OF CULTURAL IDENTITY
FOR THE SVAN ETHNOGRAPHIC GROUP
WITHIN INTERNAL MIGRATION**

Migratory Processes and Cultural Identity

Migration is one of the accompanying phenomena of the globalization process taking place in the modern world. There are numerous reasons causing this: political, economic, religious, socio-cultural, natural/ecological, etc. Clearly, every type of migration has its own specific characteristics, still, migration as a whole requires leaving a place of residence and adapting to a new environment, thereby becoming a cause for significant political, economic, psychological, social, and cultural shifts in the lives of migrants. This is why the problem of migration needs an interdisciplinary approach requiring the engagement of political scientists, economists, psychologists, sociologists, ethnologists, culturologists, and others in research.

As ethnomusicologists, we can contribute to this research by studying the issue's sociocultural aspects.

The research topic of the current article deals with the issue of Svan migrants preserving their cultural identity.

Cultural identity, which covers ethnic and individual parameters, provides a person the means to feel a sense of belonging to a specific sociocultural environment, find their own place, and freely orient themselves to the outer world (Bhugra et al, 2005). To express it another way, cultural identity is an aggregate of behavioral characteristics and a way of thinking a person acquires through the influence of their own social circle with which self-identification is one of the basic needs of an individual (Melnikova, 2010).

A cultural identity seemingly exists on its own and is "safely" in a society where everyone sees each other as like themselves. It is only as the result of influence from external factors that an individual is fully considered by members of a society, and in the best case, is cared for in order to be retained, or in a worse case, is lost.

The problem of retaining a cultural identity began capturing the attention of scientists even more because the issue of leveling cultural differences stood quite starkly amid the conditions of globalization and the accompanying intensive migrations; modern forms of mutual cultural exchange stood at the forefront of their mixing process, and in frequent cases, caused cultural creolization¹ or acculturation.²

¹ A term by Édouard Glissant, a writer and philosopher from Martinique, which describes the mutual encounter and penetration of cultures and peoples founded on their own traditions and roots, except enriched through the cultural traditions of other peoples.

² The term is used in ethnography and culturology. It appeared in the USA in the 1930s. Acculturation denotes the processes of the mutual influence of cultures, resulting in the culture of one people entirely, or in part, assimilating the culture of another people (usually one more developed).

These processes themselves are not viewed as negative signs, although they do create a risk of losing a cultural identity for minor peoples and ethnographic groups with unique cultural characteristics, including Georgia, with its rich cultural heritage being the cornerstone of its identity.

From this standpoint, Svaneti is one of the most traditional regions in Georgia, which thanks to its geographical location, socio-economic status, and exceptional loyalty to traditions, has vibrantly preserved its centuries-long traditions, beliefs, customs, language, material, or sacred cultural heritage to almost the 21st century.

This is precisely the reason why, to this day, Svaneti attracts like a diamond foreign scholars or tourists interested in traditions unblemished by any native or global culture, with no interruption in this flow from various countries in any season.

It is not happenstance that Zemo Svaneti³ was declared a monument of World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO.

In consideration of everything previously mentioned, the influence of internal migration processes having taken place within Georgia on the cultural identity of the Svan ethnographic group is of particular interest. It can be said that migration has turned out to be sort of a challenge for Svans loyal to traditions. The main thrust of my work is to study how the Svan ethnographic group met with and countered this challenge,⁴ having discovered themselves in contact with a different sociocultural environment.

Svan Migration in Georgia's Lowland Regions

In the past century, at various times and under various circumstances, Svans were forced to leave their own region and settle in the Georgian lowlands. These migrations, in one case, were planned and voluntary, and in another, spontaneous and forced.

The Svans' planned and voluntary migration was connected to the "distribution" planned by the government after WWII, the primary reason for which was the particularly harsh socio-economic and demographic situation created in the mountainous regions, which was mostly associated with the lack of land and population overgrowth (Gotsiridze, 2011). With the aim of improving conditions for those in the mountains, the government at that time began to resettle them in the lowlands, which took place all over Georgia and even affected the Svans.

The spontaneous, forced migration in the years 1987–1989 is connected to some natural cataclysms occurring in Svaneti. In particular, due to natural disasters (avalanches and landslides) that had taken place in many villages in Zemo and Kvemo Svaneti,⁵ the government had to resettle them in various parts of the country. The relocations particularly occurred in the municipalities and villages of Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Gardabani, Marneuli, and Tetrtskaro.

By considering the reasons for these two migrant groups relocating, the place of resettlement, migration duration, and other similar factors, and based on a study of the aspects of their modern sociocultural

³ It means Upper Svaneti.

⁴ In the present article, the migratory issues of the population of Zemo Svaneti - Mestia municipality and its villages are examined. Therefore, wherever it is not specified, Zemo Svaneti is implied.

⁵ It means Lower Svaneti.

lifestyle, it became possible to provide some answers to the work's main questions:

1. In what forms did the migrated Svans preserve their cultural identity?
2. From this aspect, are there any differences between the Svans who willfully departed, and the emigrants forcefully separated from their own roots?
3. Does time have any influence on the quality of cultural identity preservation or not?

The answers to these questions were obtained by focusing on the basic social identity markers of the Svan ethnographic group, such as language, religion, social practices (lifestyle traditions – beliefs, rituals, celebrations), traditional art (folklore), and “experiencing the homeland”.⁶

Basic Markers of the Svan Cultural Identity

Each one of these will be briefly reviewed to clearly see their importance in the Svans' past and the quality of preservation in the present day.

The Svan language is one of the “oldest” members of the Kartvelian language family, even in the Svans' recent past (until the last years of the 20th century), it had been completely isolated from the influence of external factors; communication in traditional Svan families consisting of many members was only in Svan; in the 1980s, there were still some living elders in Svaneti who did not know Georgian.

Religious beliefs. To this day in Svaneti, so-called “religious syncretism” is evident. Extremely rich traditions of Christian culture are presented alongside concepts containing pre-Christian religious elements, and vestiges of animist and totemic beliefs.

The cult of the departed was especially strong out of the pre-Christian concepts in Svaneti and numerous rituals associated with it have survived. Notable among these is *Lipnali*, the traditional ritual of “hosting” souls, which was fully observed⁷ by every Svan family annually in January.

On the other hand, there are around 160 Christian feast days and 300 churches recorded in Svaneti with the unique material culture monuments contained within them – frescoes, icons, books, and precious church items.

The cult of St. George was especially meaningful to Svans, corroborated by the remarkable number of churches bearing this saint's name, and by the Svan oral folklore and folk music where there are many surviving examples dedicated to *Jgrag* (St. George).

The Church of *St. Cyricus and Julitta* in Kala Village, Mestia municipality, and the Church of the Virgin, *Lamaria*, in Ushguli, are special places of worship for the Zemo Svans. Along with Easter (*Khosha Tanap*) and St. Thomas Sunday (*Uplish*), Kvirikoba (*Ligurke*), Dormition (*Limrie*), and the feast of St. George (*Ligiergi*), were considered the greatest feast days in Svaneti.

Yet, ecclesiastical feast days were marked in the “folk style” by the Svans: the church official or *morige* (*starosta* in Kvemo Svaneti) would bring out the icon of the saint being celebrated, circle the church 3 times with worshippers, and then stand at the church entrance and begin blessing the families, the el-

⁶ By this, I mean the need for migrant contact with the native region.

⁷ Besarion Nizharadze noted that the Svans did not bestow such honor upon the living as they did the dead, because according to their beliefs, the souls of the departed could positively influence the lives of those still living and intercede before the divine. The health of family members, reproduction of livestock, and abundance in the harvest were dependent on the souls' benevolence (Nizharadze, 1962).

ders of whom had brought baked *lemzir* (blessed bread) and an offering for their own family members. At the same time, a “sacrificial” offering procured through the village’s shared funds would be slaughtered, cooked on location, and a great feast with singing and dancing held in the churchyard.

Social Practices. Out of the domestic traditions, special ones for the Svans were rules for leading a supra, people’s court, mourning the dead, preserving domestic hierarchies and family member subordination, marital sanctity – family integrity, etc.

The first three toasts at any supra were traditionally dedicated to the great God (“Khosha Gherbet”), the archangel (“Mkem Taringzel”), and St. George (“Jragi”), accordingly.

The Svans “established justice through mediation according to morals and centuries-long customs”. (Gabliani, 1925: 151) Even in the 21st century, there have been cases when Svans dissatisfied with a modern court verdict had established and carried out “folk justice” through ancestral laws.⁸

Svan family honor was frequently judged according to honoring a deceased person expressed in traditional forms of mourning: in women’s laments (“lilchal” or “lirechal” in Svan) and men singing *Zari* or *Kviria*, without which it was considered shameful to “send-off” a deceased person.

Dimitri Arakishvili wrote concerning the Svan family: “the Svan domestic way of life still has some surviving remnants of a clan structure. For example, the head of a family is obeyed by everyone, no questions asked. Honoring elders has been made into law by the Svans (Arakishvili, 1950: 6–7)”. The *makhvshi* enjoyed special honor in a Svan family, the *sakartskhuli* (a specially carved armchair) of whom no one else had the right to sit in.

Marriage and marital relations were firm and unsullied for the Svans, therefore the destruction of a family was extremely rare.

Traditional Art. Works of highly developed polyphonic musical thought in the form of three-voice songs have been preserved by the Svans, with most being performed as a round dance – one of the most archaic forms. It is significant that Svans always considered folk singing one of the primary attributes of their cultural originality and deemed it mandatory to pass it on to future generations.

Traditional Svan cuisine is an important element of the Svan identity, the popularity of which has spread far beyond Svaneti.

Rich traditions of folk cottage industries have been preserved for us by Svaneti. Out of these, the traditions of making wool felt and Svan hats have been trending until recently. For the Svans, the latter is not just a head covering, it is “a symbol of a Svan man’s masculine nature, conscience, strength, and honor, therefore a woman cannot wear one (interview with Darejan Gulbani, 2022)”. If some unseemly act was committed by a man, there was a saying “echish Pakv gimsu khaikha” – “may his cap fall to the ground”; whereas if he did some valiant deed, it was said “okresh Pakv khag” – “he wears a golden cap”. Thus, on one hand, the Svan cap was one of the elaborate accessories of ethnographic attire representing a man’s invariable head covering in any season until recently, on the other hand, however, it is a sign of a Svan man’s honor.

Experiencing the Homeland. A good account of the Svans’ view of their native region is given by

⁸ For this, those suspected of committing a crime were made to swear on a shrine. As it is known, there have not been any occurrences where a Svan has not confessed to a crime when swearing an oath.

Vakhushti Batonishvili: “The Svans have an excessive love for their homeland. It is difficult for a Svan to leave his home territory even for a short while. Many Svans grow old without seeing any other regions but Lechkhumi. Many Zemo Svans have not seen Kvemo Svaneti (Bagrationi, 1973: 316)”. Possibly, such a view as this has facilitated a large portion of the Svan population remaining in Svan villages until recent times.

The Problem of Cultural Identity Regarding Planned and/or Voluntary Svan Migration

Beginning in the 1950s, a planned migration of populations from the mountainous regions of East and West Georgia was implemented through an initiative of the central Georgian government, which served to improve the Svans’ living conditions. It is worth pointing out that the migration was voluntary and quite large scale: at first it affected approximately 50 families from 10 villages, then their numbers noticeably increased in stages.

The resettlement of Svans took place in Gardabani municipality villages – Didi Lilo, Krtsanisi, and Nagebi. Such a picture resulted from a survey of the inhabitants of these three villages:

The Svan language has primarily been preserved in the young generations of families where the mother and father are Svan, or the grandmother-grandfather generation is still alive. Yet, in some villages, young people speaking Svan are found beyond these factors. For example, in Krtsanisi Village, where primarily Svans live to this day, even the youngest people speak in Svan.

Churches dedicated to St. George have been built by Svans in all three villages, where Orthodox church services are conducted on Christian feast days. The migrants observe the fasts, give confessions, receive communion, and in parallel with all this, celebrate feast days according to the folk custom – with a blessing by an “officiant”, offering *lemzir* bread, a public feast, and singing and dancing – after the conduction of a liturgy by a priest.⁹

Apart from this, migrants from all three villages attend memorial services conducted on commemoration days for the departed established according to the Christian church calendar, where they commemorate their own departed family members. On the other hand, however, they unwaveringly keep the *Lipanali* tradition and fervently believe that this is “the greatest offering” for the deceased souls of their families (interview with Taliko Avaliani, 2022). Thus, religious syncretism is evident to this day among Svans who had migrated almost half a century ago.

Among the domestic traditions, the rule of leading a supra is relevant to the first three “canonical” toasts.

On rare occasions, but when it is needed, they resort to mediation services and carry out the “swearing on a shrine” ritual.

The ritual of mourning the dead has remained unchanged – *Laments* by women (video ex. 1), *Zaris* and *Kvirias* by men.

Domestic splits are extremely rare, especially if both spouses are Svans.

It is intriguing that no folk singing ensembles have been created in any of the planned settlement vil-

⁹ The only difference is that bloody sacrifices are no longer carried out in the churchyard.

lages to this day, although Svans do sing Svan songs of various genres such as “Lile”, “Didebata”, “O, krisdesh”, “Jrag”, “Kansav Kipiane”, etc., in everyday life, especially at supras and folk celebrations. “In this aspect, people from Latali are especially remarkable, they do not lose any traditions famous for singing anywhere (interview with Imeda Parjiani, 2022)”.¹⁰

Svan cuisine unconditionally retains priority in the life of local Svans, even the Svan cap remains a symbol of a Svan man’s honor to this day.

“Experience of the homeland” has not subsided in the generation that has spent its childhood in Svaneti. They try to keep in contact with Svaneti and even make the young generation come to love their native region. It is notable that in recent years, the frequency of visits to Svaneti by the younger generation of planned migrants has increased.

Eco-migration from Svaneti

One of the first wide-scale migrations of inhabitants stricken as a result of natural disasters relating to excessive snowfall took place at the end of the 1980s. In particular, avalanches fell in many villages in Zemo and Kvemo Svaneti in the winters of 1987–89, followed by the destruction of homes and avalanche victims. An evacuation of approximately 16,000 people was carried out from the disaster zone. The government issued a plan for them to be resettled in various regions within Georgia.

The distribution of ecomigrants, in some cases, took place in already-settled locations, and in other cases, new villages were built for the Svans.

The “host” population of already settled regions was in some places Georgian, and in others non-Georgian.¹¹

To determine how resettlement within various environments influenced the main markers of Svan ecomigrants’ cultural identity, I conducted a study within three groups:

1. Among ecomigrants resettled in a Georgian environment.
2. Among ecomigrants resettled in a non-Georgian environment.
3. Among ecomigrants who had their own villages built.

The Issue of Cultural Identity Among Ecomigrants Resettled in a Georgian Environment

Following the natural disasters (avalanches) of 1987, 150 families consisting of 25 clans migrated from 4 villages of the Mestia municipality to the village of Tandzia in the Bolnisi municipality. The district was named “Akhali Tandzia” by the Svans.

In the same year, up to 300 families made up of 15 clans were resettled from up to 20 villages from 3 communities in the Lentekhi municipality to Sakulia Village of the Tskaltubo municipality in Imereti. A “Svan district” was formed by the ecomigrants in Sakulia and they named it “Akhali Sakulia”.

In both cases, those already residing there were Georgians, and it can be said that the Svans did not

¹⁰ By the way, Svan singing is still alive in all the villages where people from Latali have settled.

¹¹ In the case of the latter, the phenomena accompanying migratory processes must be examined within the context of the coadaptation of migrants and those they encounter, because the main challenge of such migrations is a peaceful agreement on their traditions, values, and views.

require any great effort to preserve a cultural identity within the conditions of a kindred ethnicity and religion. Accordingly, they kept Svan as their main language of communication with no problems at all. It is notable that today even the young descendants of migrants from Tandzia and Sakulia speak in Svan.

To this day, the traditional rituals of *Limpari*¹² (*Lamproba*) and *Lipanali* are observed out of the folk celebrations in Tandzia. In parallel with this, the feast days of *Ligiergi* (St. George), *Limrie* (the Dormition), and *Barblash* (St. Barbara) are celebrated in churches built by the Svans themselves and dedicated to St. George, the Archangel, and St. Barbara, people attend the liturgy and partake of the sacraments (video ex. 2).

Even those from Sakulia mark secular and ecclesiastical holidays in parallel with each other, such as *Skaldob*, *Lipaanal*, *Ligiergi*, *Limrie*, etc. By the way, it is really the result of the Svans' activity that Sakulia's old, semi-derelict church was renovated through joint efforts, where people attend liturgy, receive communion, and after the traditional church service, celebrate the holidays according to their own rites (with the *starosta*¹³ benediction ritual, *lemzir* bread, a sacrificial offering, a feast, etc.). Even more, the ecomigrants settled in Sakulia go down to the *Skaldoba* festival on Pentecost, which is held at the Church of the Archangel built on Mt. Iskaldi in Paki Village. Along with *Lipanali*, this feast day is also a good example of the religious syncretism¹⁴ active in Svaneti to this day devoutly followed by the migrants (video ex. 3).

Neither did the migrants settled in a Georgian environment have any trouble in preserving domestic traditions. The rituals of honoring the head of the family, the inviolable family, leading a supra (the three traditional toasts), bidding farewell to a deceased person, and folk justice have more or less been kept uncorrupted; in many migrant homes, you will see the carved chair for the makhvshi – the traditional Svan armchair – placed in the most conspicuous spot in the house. The tradition of men wearing the Svan cap is also worthy of note, which “helps them feel close to their native region” (interview with Leila Tamliani, 2022). Traditional Svan cuisine has also been fully preserved.

Some descendants of the famous Svan singer and choirmaster Platon Dadvani – his two brothers Vano and Varden Dadvani – live among the migrants settled in Tandzia, although no choir has been formed in the village. According to some respondents, the natural disasters that destroyed their domiciles and killed their loved ones (from this standpoint, the Mulakhi tragedy was unprecedented) caused serious psychological trauma for the migrants. During the first stage of resettlement, this is what hindered the continuation of singing traditions, later on, it was an exodus of singers from Georgia due to unfavorable economic conditions (interview with Badri Dadvani, 2022).

4 years after resettlement, children's and elders' ensembles were formed by ecomigrant Guram Kv-

¹² *Lamproba* is a traditional pagan spring festival dedicated to fertility with lit lamps right in the middle of the village which now coincides with the Christian holiday of Candlemas – it is observed on February 1 and after the introduction of Christianity is called *Svimnishs* (*Svimonoba*).

¹³ The one offering the benedictions is called this in Kvemo Svaneti, whereas in Zemo Svaneti they are called a *morige*.

¹⁴ According to Svan tradition, the sacred mountain of Iskaldi was a gathering spot for *pusdas* before the coming of Christ. *Pusdas* were pre-Christian religious entities protecting a sacred treasure that was replaced by the “Horsemen of White George” following the advent of Christianity. Still, the ritual of sacrificing a sacred bull done for the “*pusdai litablieli*” (the *pusda* feast), is observed to this day on every Pentecost and is still mentioned as “*pusdai litablieli*”. To this day it is forbidden for women to attend this feast day.

astiani in Sakulia Village, Tskaltubo municipality. Only Svan songs, dances, and round dances were included in their repertoire. The children's ensemble lasted for almost 10 years, the elders' ensemble, however, fell apart quite soon due to an exceedingly interesting reason: because almost every Svan village has its own song and round dance variants, the elders resettled from various villages had a difficult time compromising on their own variant and reaching a consensus on a single one!¹⁵

There are currently no ensembles in Sakulia, although 24 year old Otar Gvichiani, an heir of the local migrants and student at the Kutaisi Cultural Education Institute, and who sings, dances, and has mastery of folk instruments in the Lentekhi Municipality Lagusheda Ensemble, plans to restore Svan musical traditions in Sakulia and involve the younger generation in this process.

The Sakulia migrants have a more intense relationship with their native region than those from Tandzia. Long distances are named as a reason for this by those from Tandzia (interview with Leila Tamliani, 2022), which are less problematic for Sakulia residents.¹⁶ Still, descendants of Tandzia migrants frequently pay visits to their homeland.

The Issue of Cultural Identity Among Ecomigrants Resettled in a Non-Georgian Environment

In this group, I will discuss the ecomigrants settled in Tsalka, Dmanisi, and Tamarisi Village of the Marneuli municipality, who migrated in the years 1987–97 as a result of natural disasters occurring in Zemo and Kvemo Svaneti.

Migrants from Mestia municipality villages were resettled in this region: approximately 150 families from Latali, Nakra, Pari, and Ipari in Tsalka; approximately 300 families from Chuberi, Etseri, Latali, Pari, Becho, and Lenjeri in Dmanisi; and approximately 50 families from Mulakhi in Tamarisi.

When resettling the migrants in a non-Georgian environment, the government's special goal was the "Georgianization" of lowland regions settled with ethnic minorities. For this, such municipalities in Kakheti and Kartli were purposefully selected, where in comparison to other Georgian regions, a large percentage of the non-Georgian population (Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Greeks) lived. Migration into these regions envisioned a "strengthening of the lowlands" (interview with Iulon Margiani, 2022), which created some serious problems,¹⁷ from the standpoint of physical cohabitation and preserving traditions, for those forcefully resettled within conditions of a different ethnicity and religion. On one hand, "adapting to the dominant role of people of other ethnicities in Georgia was foreign to the Svans" (interview with Gurgen Gurchiani, 2022), on the other hand, neither were the locals able to accommodate

¹⁵ When interviewing the residents of Sakulia, another interesting reason made itself known, due to which, as it was said, the Svans, being in a new environment, had trouble spreading their own traditional music. In comparison to Svaneti, where there was a lot of snow for most of the year, the people rested from their labors and found time to gather, make merry, and sing, in the lowlands where there was almost no snow, the migrants no longer had time to sing and dance, being forced to work the entire year in order to support their families (interview with Guram Kvastiani, 2022).

¹⁶ It is approximately 80km from Tskaltubo to Lentekhi, and approximately 600km from Tandzia to Mestia.

¹⁷ The deal is that the planned migrants voluntarily resettled as neighbors to the non-Georgian population (in Krtsanisi and Nagebi, for example), knew beforehand where they had to live, and at the cost of improving their economic situation, they consented to this (interview with Darejan Gulbani, 2022), accordingly the coadaptation process proceeded in relatively peaceful terms. This contrasts with the ecomigrants, who unexpectedly left without any place to live and were psychologically traumatized, wound up in a non-Georgian environment far from their own region, and foreign, at that (interview with Gegi Gvichiani, 2022).

the “sharing” of workable land, being opposed to the migrants building an Orthodox church, protesting the tradition of observing holidays with Svan rituals, etc. According to respondents, it took years for relationships to adjust, which was a significant hindrance to Svans establishing themselves in these regions (interview with Merab Gurguliani, 2022). Still, there are two sides to a coin, and ecomigrants, along with material security, sensed the necessity of preserving their own identity in a foreign environment, which was revealed in sharply defined trends to protect and preserve their domestic and cultural traditions.

First off, the Svans preserved communication in the Svan language, which continued to this day by the younger generation; voluntarily or through some effort, they managed to build Orthodox churches where they attend Sunday liturgies, partake in the holy sacraments, and after the end of liturgy, observe ecclesiastical holidays using Svan rituals. To this day, most families also carry out the rituals for *Lipnali* and *Limpari*.

The traditions for leading a Svan supra, being heads of families, domestic integrity, and folk justice are especially followed in Marneuli, Tsalka, and Dmanisi, people preserve Svan cuisine, wear Svan caps, and are in contact with Svaneti, according to their means. There are even cases of returning to their own villages.

It must be noted that regardless of co-adapting with a non-Georgian population, no mixed families with non-Georgians have been formed in any of the villages discussed.

The tendency to protect Svan musical folklore as one of the main markers of the Svan cultural identity, made itself especially known among the ecomigrants resettled in a non-Georgian environment. In particular, some folk song ensembles were created within a few years by Svans living in Tsalka and Dmanisi: *Trialeti* in Tsalka (directed by Gegi Gvichiani) and *Shgarida* in Dmanisi (directed by Gurgen Gurchiani) (video ex. 4, 5).

Primarily Svan songs and round dances are performed by *Trialeti* and *Shgarida*. It is salient that *Trialeti* members are descendants¹⁸ of famous singers and dancers, even Gurgen Gurchiani, the director of *Shgarida*, is the continuator of a singing family’s traditions, having been involved in the endeavor of restoring and reviving long-forgotten Svan songs since his youth. To this day, he is ardently devoted to this task, and it is thanks to him that any old or young people have some vocal skills to sing in the Dmanisi municipality. “If we discuss the Dmanisi example, Svan songs are performed more frequently here than in Svaneti (interview with Gurgen Gurchiani, 2022)”.

From this standpoint, there is a remarkable situation in Tamarisi Village of the Marneuli municipality. No Svan choral ensembles have been formed in this village, still, “Riho”, “Lile”, “Jgrag” are sung in everyday life, deceased people are buried with a *Zari* and women sing laments. According to one respondent, “Upon arriving in Tamarisi, you think you’re in Little Svaneti: you can speak to everyone in Svan, you’re treated to Svan cuisine, the traditions of the Svan supra are kept, family hierarchies are not violated...” (interview with Beso Pirtskhelani, 2022).

¹⁸ Gegi Gvichiani, the ensemble director, is the son of Gunter Gvichiani, a well-known singer of the Latali Ensemble; Merab Gurguliani is the son of the legendary dancer Maharbi Gurguliani, etc.

The Issue of Cultural Identity Among Ecomigrants Who Had Villages Built for Them

Ecomigrants settled in Udabno Village of the Sagarejo municipality, and in Didgori Village of the Tetrtskaro municipality are discussed in this group. Most of them had their own homes built by the government, and others, however, moved into houses left vacant by the non-Georgian population. Those from Udabno and Didgori were met with some special challenges in the resettlement locations, and they had to adapt to not a local population, but to difficult living conditions.¹⁹

Ecomigrants from the villages of Mestia – Ipari, Kala, Mulakhi, Latali (around 100 families) – were resettled in Udabno, Sagarejo municipality, and approximately 40 families from 8 villages in Mestia were moved to Didgori, Tetrtskaro municipality.

As expected, the migrants not encountering any local population, comparatively more easily, and better, accordingly, preserved the primary markers of a cultural identity. In conditions where migrants were given free rein to create a “Svan environment”, clearly the language was able to be preserved on a colloquial level. Even the observance of domestic traditions and religious holidays continued through Svan rituals, no one was hindered in building a church. The only problem remaining is traveling to and from Svaneti on a more desirable basis, although they still manage to go to their native villages on major religious holidays and try to bring their families along during the summer.

I will focus on the quality of traditional music preservation in everyday life, as well as in secondary performance.

Very soon after settling in Didgori Village, the folklore ensemble *Didgori* was formed under the direction of Joto Arghvliani, which along with older singers, also comprises young people. The *Didgori* Ensemble repertoire primarily consists of Svan songs and round dances (around 30 works), that are performed by those from *Didgori* in everyday life and on stage. Currently, the ensemble is directed by 68 year old Ivane Goshuani, but the 92 year old Joto Arghvliani is still actively involved in selecting the repertoire, teaching songs, and assigning voice parts (video ex. 6).

The women’s folklore ensemble *Kasletila* and girls’ ensemble *Garejelebi* were formed in Udabno Village, Sagarejo municipality, directed by 40 year old Pikria Margiani. Members of *Kasletila* are aged in range from 19–69. Most of them are from traditional singing families and they remember old works of Svan songs.

A majority of *Kasletila* members had sung in mixed choirs from various villages from a young age, which is why the ensemble repertoire primarily consists of men’s songs mostly performed with round dances (video ex. 7).

The young girls’ ensemble of *Garejelebi* performs old Svan songs, although they do not pass up on any songs in the “new format”, playing them on the classical panduri instead of the *chuniri* or *changi*.

Before ending this article, I will focus on the first, unusual case of Svan migration to Kakhpari Village, Gurjaani municipality. Since this took place almost a century ago, of the Svans’ free will, it is interesting to compare the quality of cultural identity preservation by the Svans of Kakhpari to the migrants of the aforementioned groups (planned and forced migration), and possibly making a certain prognosis, as well.

¹⁹ For years, the villages did not have any water system, electricity, and natural gas.

In 1936, 8 families from 5 clans (Gulbani, Pirveli, Tamliani, Kordzaia, Khvibliani) related to each other voluntarily decided to resettle in the eastern lowlands, Kakheti in particular, from the village of Ipari, Mestia municipality, in order to improve their living conditions, where they turned a tract of forest between Telavi and Gurjaani into vacant lots, and named the village Kakhetis Pari, or Kakhipari.

It is remarkable that for over 8 decades, no one had been interested in studying this group of Svans from a traditional preservation aspect; today no one from the first generation of Svans settled in Kakhipari is alive. Therefore, finding any information was only possible from descendants of the migrants, who are the oldest people born in Kakhipari 10 years after the migration. They are currently 75–76 years old and have lived their entire life away from Svaneti.

Stemming from such information, only the 2nd and 3rd generations of migrants speak in Svan, almost a century after voluntarily settling in Kakhipari (people approximately 45–75 years old). The 4th generation (20–45 yrs.) understands it, but cannot speak it, while the 5th generation (0–20 yrs.) does not even comprehend their native language. The foremost reason stated by them for this is the relationship with a non-Svan society and the creation of mixed families where the parents' colloquial language is Georgian.

“Religious syncretism” has lost any pertinency among the Svans from Kakhipari. They observe ecclesiastical holidays along with native Kakhetians at the church in the neighboring village of Vachnadziani, and not with the old Svan rituals. Their ancestors carried out the *Lipanali* ritual, whereas they themselves no longer do so.

The main rule of beginning a supra (the three toasts previously mentioned) has been preserved to this day out of the domestic traditions; according to one of the local respondents (who is a lawyer by trade), not one family created by a Svan has fallen apart in Kakhipari (interview with Nugzar Gulbani, 2022).

To this day, homemakers prepare Svan dishes (having even taught them to Kakhetians); still, Svan men sporting Svan caps are a rare sight.

None of the respondents from Kakhipari have any memories remaining of Svan songs being performed in everyday life, nor of any kind of ensemble existing in the village.

As for their relationship to their native region, respondents say the older generation has trouble traveling long distances, the young people, however, “no longer have a desire for Svaneti” in the same it “called out” to their ancestors, therefore they seldom travel there as tourists (interview with Avto Khvistani, 2022).

Thus, it can be said that only a handful of domestic traditions out of the five identity markers have been preserved by the descendants of migrants who voluntarily resettled in Kakheti from Svaneti almost a century ago.

Let's examine the plausible reasons for the identity markers coming to an end by considering the time of migration among the oldest group of migrants so we can discuss the perspective of preserving Svan traditions among other migrant groups.

Both young and old knew the Svan language in Kakhipari at the beginning stage of migration, even though it was relegated to the back burner when being surrounded by teachers and peers constantly speaking in Georgian in kindergartens and schools, and became a language spoken only at home. Whereas, after the children grew up and started mixed families with the locals, the necessity for speaking in Svan gradu-

ally disappeared and only remained as a means for speaking with the older generation. In the wake of the eventual departure of the latter, however, Georgian became established as the language of communication.

It was demonstrated by the study that one of the factors impeding the preservation of an ethnographic group's original traditions is the creation of mixed families. As I pointed out, 8 related Svan families settled in Kakhpari, with the first descendants naturally forming mixed families in contrast to the previously discussed migrant groups who consisted of families from various villages. Therefore, the possibility for their descendants to create Svan families was much greater, better facilitating the preservation of identity markers.

It is significant that respondents from Kakhpari remember the *Lipanali* ritual carried out by their ancestors, with themselves no longer continuing to do so, because such a practice was foreign to their Kakhetian or Lechkhumian spouses (interview with Nugzar Gulbani, 2022).

Along with the abandonment of the Svan folk rituals for observing church holidays, the traditional songs and chants accompanying them were also naturally forgotten, having been replaced by the universally known Kakhetian songs.

It is interesting that two traditions associated with the supra have been preserved by the everyday life of Svans from Kakhpari, and it is not surprising that they have not lost any pertinence in Kakheti itself. These are the tradition of beginning a supra (the 3 traditional toasts) and Svan cuisine, which holds an “honorable” place beside Kakhetian cuisine.

Conclusion

In relation to the preservation of traditions by the migrant groups examined, it is possible to provide some answers to the questions posed at the beginning of the article based on the study: In what form did the migrated Svans retain a cultural identity?

The Svan language turned out to be one of the most stable cultural identity markers, which planned, as well as forced migrants speak to this day. Yet, it must be stated that the necessity of communication in Svan is gradually lessened by co-habitation with a Georgian-language population – everyday Georgian-language relationships – especially among the youth; adding to this is the creation of mixed families, where despite one of the parents being of Svan origin, the children do not understand Svan speech. It is true that there are some families purposefully teaching the Svan language to young kids, yet their numbers are small and do not alter the general picture.²⁰

Religious syncretism is evident in every migrant group (apart from those in Kakhpari), still, a large part of the youth who follow the traditional Christian rites, partake in the sacraments, views the rituals of *Lipanali* and *Limpari*, the benefaction rite of the *morige*, and bloody sacrifices frequently carried out by the older generation without any blessing from the priest, with skepticism.

Out of the domestic traditions, bidding farewell to a deceased person remains unchanged (singing *a Lament* and *Zari*), although the wailers and funeral singers are mostly women and men²¹ of an older age (60 and up) (video ex. 8).

²⁰ The “Georgianization” of the Svan language is a separate topic for discussion – approximately 50% of the old Svan words in the Svan language have been replaced by Georgian equivalents, which unfortunately is an irreversible process.

²¹ The Zari, unfortunately, is in danger of being lost in migrants' everyday life, in Svan reality.

Out of the traditional arts, Svan cuisine is popular with every generation, which is not surprising when considering the high gastronomic culture characteristic of Georgians.

Men from various generations wearing Svan caps are frequently seen in migrant villages, although most of them are older than 60.

Svan songs are mostly sung by the older generation on religious holidays (especially where people from Latali live), only without a round dance. No one plays the *chuniri* and *changi*, or dances in the previously discussed villages. The tradition of family music making is lost among the migrated Svans.

Only in the locations where ensembles have been created are Svan songs of various genres performed to the accompaniment of round dancing, dancing, and instruments by ensemble members on stage and at folk celebrations.

The older migrant generation tries to awaken a sense of the homeland in their descendants, although in frequent cases, as shown through the study (especially among planned migrants), the evident increase in traveling to Svaneti by the younger generation in the past decade, is taking place more in part due to the good order of this region, it being declared a tourism zone, and increasing awareness, than for experiencing the homeland.

From the standpoint of preserving an identity, is there a different picture among Svans who had voluntarily left and ecomigrants forcefully severed from their own roots, or not?

A connection between the reason for migration and the quality of identity preservation was revealed by a comparison of planned and forced migrants. In contrast to a planned, voluntary migration when it is a migrant's choice to leave the homeland, and accordingly, there is a predilection for adapting to a new environment, being forced to leave a place of residence is a painful process (especially when preceded by tragic events), is accompanied by intense nostalgia, and naturally the motivation for preserving traditions is stronger.

In our case, this discrepancy is impossible to overlook when comparing such cultural identity markers as folk art and the homeland experience. Folklore ensembles performing traditional songs, round dances, and dances, playing the *chuniri* and *changi*, participating in folk celebrations, and popularizing traditional Svan music in Georgia and abroad, were put together in almost all the villages settled by ecomigrants.

Due to the aforementioned factors, the homeland experience is considerably stronger among the ecomigrants than the planned migrants. One confirmation of this is that in a few years after resettlement, some ecomigrants either renovated their own homes in Svaneti, or bought new ones, attempting as much as possible to retain any contact with the native region. Even the frequent travels of ecomigrant descendants, in comparison to planned migrant descendants, are more associated with the homeland experience, than a tourist interest.

Is time an influence on the migrants' quality of cultural identity preservation or not?

In considering the previously mentioned factor associated with Kakhpari, it can be said that time as a reason for a "weakening" identity cannot be discussed using the example of the first migrant Svans. Therefore, predicting that Svan traditions will be lost over time among migrants who resettled relatively later, is not correct. Still, despite the preservation quality of the resettled Svans' cultural identity gradually diminishing, it is difficult to say what it will be like even half a century from now.

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Respondents:

- Avtandil Khvistani – 76. Planned migrant descendant. Born in Kakhpari, Sagarejo municipality.
- Badri Dadvani – 60. Resettled in Tandzia, Bolnisi municipality from Mestia, 1989.
- Darejan Gulbani – 65. Planned settler in Didi Lilo, Gardabani municipality, 1970.
- Gegi Gvichiani – 38. Ecomigrant. Resettled in the Tsalka municipality from Latali, Mestia region. Director of local folklore Trialeti Ensemble.
- Guram Kvastiani – 59. Ecomigrant. Resettled in the village of Akhali Sakulia, Tskaltubo municipality from Mutsdi Village of the Choluri community, Lentekhi municipality, 1987.

Imeda Parjiani – 70. Resettled in Didi Lilo, Gardabani municipality from Latali, Mestia municipality, 1970.

Iulon Margiani – 85. Ecomigrant. Resettled in Nagebi, Gardabani district from Latali, Mestia district. Former director of Nagebi School.

Ivane Goshuani – 68. Ecomigrant. Resettled in Didgori, Tetrtskaro municipality from Tskhumari Village, Mestia region. Director of the local folklore Didgori Ensemble.

Liana Pirveli – 52. Planned migrant descendant. Born in Didi Lilo, Gardabani municipality. Kindergarten director.

Merab Gurguliani – 55. Ecomigrant. Resettled in Tsalka, from Latali, Mestia region. Member of the Trialeti Folklore Ensemble in Tsalka.

Nugzar Gulbani – 75. Planned migrant descendant. Born in Kakhpari, Sagarejo municipality. Lawyer.

Otar Gvichiani – 24. Ecomigrant descendant. A resident of Akhali Sakulia, Tskaltubo municipality, a student of Kutaisi Cultural Education Institute, member of the Lentekhi municipality's Lagusheda Ensemble.

Porpile Chelidze – 41. Resettled in Sakulia, Tskaltubo municipality from Chukuli Village, Lentekhi municipality in 1987.

Taliko Avaliani – 63. Planned settler in Krtsanisi, Gardabani municipality, 1980.

Please see the QR code for video examples



MIGRATION FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE LOWLANDS – THE PAST AND PRESENT OF TRADITIONAL TUSH MUSIC

When thinking about Tusheti, the first things to come to mind are the ravishing beauty of this mountainous Georgian region and impressive images of old architecture. The Tush identity and traditional way of life are defined by the highly developed culture of sheep-breeding, the universally known Tush sheep breed, *guda* cheese produced by Tush shepherds, and Tush sheep wool and the clothing made from it. There is one other thing directly associated with this region – songs and instrumental tunes played on accordion. The Tush are distinguished for their attitude regarding antiquities, the honor shown to traditions, immensely intriguing mythological and religious concepts, rituals, and customs.

At the turn of the 19th century, the Tushetian population was split up into 4 communities/societies: Tsova, Gometari, Chaghma, and Pirikiti. In contrast to the Tsova Tush, today representatives of the 3 remaining communities are mentioned with the common name of Chaghma Tush.

There are some linguistic differences between the Tsova and Chaghma Tush. Those from Chaghma Tusheti speak in the Tush dialect of the Georgian language, the Tsova however, are bilingual. Along with Georgian, they also have a domestic language, which due to its lexical, grammatical cognateness to the Vainakh language, is put into the Nakh group of the Iberian Caucasian language group by linguists. Vainakh, as well as Georgian language aspects are apparent in the speech of those conversant in this language.¹ The Tsova Tush even perform songs in their own language. Unfortunately, today Tsova Tush is viewed as a language at risk of being lost, because the number of those speaking it is diminishing more and more.

From the Mountains to the Lowlands (A Brief History of Tush Migration)

The process of the Tush population migrating from the alpine villages to the Alvani Plains began in Kakheti in the 18th century. The first settlers were Tsova Tush. Before then the Alvani Plains were uninhabited, covered in scrubland and wetlands. Migration intensified beginning in the 1830s and at the start of the 20th century the Chaghma Tush joined with the Tsova.

Some of the historical reasons for the Tush resettling in the lowlands are natural disasters, oppression from neighboring North Caucasian tribes, harsh climate conditions, and having no roads – the difficulty of having inner communication over the course of long and snowed-in winters in the mountainous regions, on one hand, and being completely cut off from the lowlands on the other.

¹ Some mutually conflicting hypotheses concerning the Tsova Tush language have been expressed. According to the dominant theory, included in the Nakh language group, Tsova Tush is a cognate of Chechen and Ingush, and the Georgian layer in this language must have appeared later. The people themselves might have resettled in Tusheti from the North Caucasus centuries ago. Some scientists do not concur with this idea. They consider a Vainakh layer to be borrowed in Tsova Tush, with the Tsova Tush being aborigines of Tusheti.

“Here during the winter, it was impossible to go from one village to another due to the great amount of snow and lack of roads. Tusheti is cut off from everything. In the winter, roads are impassable for 6–7 months. Even a priest is unable to go from village to village to give communion or to conduct funerals. There really is no mention of learning and education among us”, we read in a 1903 newspaper *Tsnobis Purtseli* (The Information Page) (Bochormeli, 1903: 1).

A residential population type characteristic of only Tusheti in Georgian reality was formed during the first stage of Tush migration through the terms “Kakhuraebi” – those going to the lowlands in winter, and “Tushuraebi”, those living in the mountains all year. A way of life phenomenon characteristic of this region appeared, “Kakhet-Tushetoba” (lit. being from Kakheti and Tusheti, trans.), the seasonal flow of the population between Kakheti and Tusheti. According to linguist Giorgi Tsotsanidze, a scholar on Tusheti, “Kakhet-Tushetoba”, being in effect over the course of an entire century, had really not had any influence on Tusheti’s ethnographic peculiarities as a well-formed socioeconomic way of living, but a new stage of the relationship of the mountains and lowlands – of Kakheti and Tusheti – began in the 1950s. This is a period of the population totally leaving Tusheti and Tusheti being transformed into summer grazing grounds”. (Tsotsanidze, 1990: 13–14) This process was facilitated by the Soviet government as well, with the forceful resettlement of thousands of mountain dwellers in the lowlands within the conditions of collectivization.

At present, the Tush are densely settled in the Akhmetia municipality, Kakheti – in Zemo and Kvemo Alvani. Tsova and Tush from Pirikita are in Zemo Alvani – and those from Chaghma and Gometsari are in Kvemo Alvani. There are Tush also living in Birkiani Village (Pankisi Gorge) and in Laliskuri and Pshaveli (Telavi municipality). Due to sheep breeding being one of the primary forms of agriculture, being in the lowlands was not strange for shepherds even at this point in time. The Alvani Plains had historically been their property.

A new term “Mtatusheti” appeared in the Georgian language following the resettlement of the Tush population in the lowlands. This term is considered improper by the Tush themselves. To denote their ancient place of residence, they use only Tusheti to this day.

Beginning in the 2nd half of the 20th century, many villages in Tusheti were deserted due to the intense migration. Still, even today a portion of the population attempts to retain connections to their roots. They temporarily return to the mountains in summer. Over the decades, the main reason for temporarily returning to the mountains are folk celebrations held during this time – “Atnigenoba”², the significance of which has not waned to this day in the recollection of the Tush, as it seems. During the summer, the Tush always returned to their own shrines to celebrate these holidays, “It was rare for a Tush to not go up into the mountains during Atnigenoba. This might have been due to some extreme need or some other insurmountable hindrances”, Mari Khachidze, a resident of Alvani and researcher and performer of Tush music, remarked in a conversation with me.³

Yet another reason for returning to the mountains has come into existence over the past few decades:

² Atnigenoba/Atengenoba/Atanagoba/Atengena – community religious celebrations held up to the start of the haymaking season in the mountains of East Georgia (Pshavi, Khevsureti, Tusheti, Khevi).

³ Interview recorded on June 20, 2022.

Tusheti has become a focal point for foreign visitors through tourism development. There is immense interest, this, in turn, stimulates the locals and increases a desire to revive, preserve, and better show off the traditions of their native region. At present, tourism has become a kind of new life for Tusheti.

Music – Companion to the Tush Way of Life

The themes and genres of Tush music are largely determined by the beliefs, universal experiences, social relationships, and agricultural forms characteristic of the mountain people. Many songs are associated with ritual customs, with the rituals being connected to community celebrations, many of which are no longer conducted today, although in the past they had great significance to a society with a traditional mindset. It was here that community members gathered, shared in each other's sorrows and joy. Many examples of oral, musical, or choreographic folklore came into existence here.

According to some ethnographic sources, on New Year's in Tusheti, the procession of bringing the ritual drinking cups from the village shrine to the public gathering spot – *Tasebchamodena* – was accompanied by the song "Jvaruli", on Christmas however, it was going door to door and performing "Alilo". On the evening of "Markhvashe moi" at the beginning of Lent, there was the ritual of drawing into a round dance "Perkhisa" in Dochu Village. Cheesefare Sunday was followed by theatric presentations, in which there was a lot of instrumental music, dancing, and games.

It is known that the Tush population resettled in the lowlands (Alvani) saw to the establishment of cultic structures and the ordering of a celebration calendar from then on. At the first stage of migration, some of the mountain shrines were re-established in the lowlands with their original names and functions (Itonishvili, 2012: 158).

In a conversation with me, Tush poet and folklorist Eter Tataraidze, recalled her childhood years and celebrations held in Alvani, during which they sang round dances ("Perkhisa"). She also remarked that all this was gradually changed by modern times, although during her time, the Tush ritualistic way of life had not been endangered due to the resettlement in the lowlands. Even in Alvani, the Tush observed the customs and rituals accompanying each feast as usual. During Atnigenoba, they would certainly return to their ancestral land and express their respect and gratitude towards their shrine churches.⁴

The festal "Lashari's Song" and the men's two-story round dance, "Korbeghela"⁵, is associated with a Tush ritualistic practice, during the performance of which the circle of men standing on each other's shoulders would start off from the *sajare* – the public gathering place at a shrine - up a steep slope, spinning around and singing, towards the shrine gate or entrance. At the shrine gate, they would circle around it 3 times and disband. The people believed that the disintegration of Korbeghela foretold harm to the village.

⁴ Interview recorded on October 19, 2022.

⁵ The term consists of two elements: "kor" and "begheli". The word *kor* denotes agricultural or residential structures in several Georgian regions. A building storing agricultural products is called a *begheli*. A musician stands in the center of the round dancers in the Tush Korbeghela and this person is called the *metsikhovne* (castle guard). This two-story round dance with a castle guard standing in the middle symbolically embodies a *kor* – a house, fortress, or tower, whereas *beghela*, the word's second component is a term originating from traditional Georgian architecture (Gujejiani, 2007: 156, 157). Korbeghela is a symbol of abundance, good harvests, and reproduction.

The oldest audio recording of “Lasharis simghera” (“Lashari’s Song”) dates to 1947 and is performed by a men’s choir singing in unison (Audioex. 1). According to G. Tsotsanidze’s account, one man called the *metsoxovne* held a panduri during the performance of “Lashari’s simghera”, stood in the middle of the circle, and began singing with instrumental accompaniment, with the unison choir responding to him (Tsotsanidze, 1993: 140). There are also some clips of “Korbeghela” shot by director Mirian Khutsishvili during the 1970s. The sound of a panduri is heard with the singing (video ex. 1). Even the preservation of Korbeghela is decided by the custom of observing surviving community celebrations in Tusheti to this day. Tush people going to the mountains in the summer try to not lose their ancestral traditions and again form round dances during the celebration.

Another ritual observed by the Tush to this day in the mountains and in Alvani is the mourning *Dala*⁶ ritual. It occupies a prominent spot in the lives of the Tush. *Dalaoba* is observed on the anniversary of a person’s death (as a rite for men, in rare exceptions, for women). On this day the deceased’s *lishani* (clothing) is arrayed in a yard, around which the women sit and lament. The men performing “*Dala*” however, line up by the clothing. Whoever ends up in the middle, the *modalave* is mounted on a so-called “spirit horse” (a horse sacrificed to the deceased. The horse is adorned with a mourning black covering and saddle bags. The *modalave* begins to sing “*Dala*”, addressing the deceased with the song and expressing words in praise of him. Those accompanying the singer answer by singing the word “*dalae*” two times in unison (sometimes the word “*hindo*” is sung). The oldest recordings of “*Dala*” date to the year 1929 (audio ex. 2).

Dalaoba, a rite honoring the dead, was connected to *Zezvaoba*, a folk celebration held annually by Tush resettled in the lowlands starting in the 1950s. Yet another tradition was established in Kvemo Alvani in 2013. The Tush pay their respects to Giorgi Antsukhelidze, a hero of the 2008 Russia-Georgia War, with a *Dalaoba*, commemorating along with him 3 heroes who perished in 1993 for Georgian unity: Omar Kortoshidze, Zaza Mozaidze, and Kakha Abulidze (Video Ex. 2).

“Korbeghela” and “*Dala*” are in fact, examples that have survived within the conditions of the Tush modern way of life. This, as it seems, was stipulated by the existence of the *Atnigenoba* community celebration, and the exemplary, profound, and solid tradition of mourning the dead within this socius.

The style and themes of traditional Tush music are greatly influenced by the agricultural activity of sheep-breeding. This activity was conditioned by Tush frequently traveling between the mountains and lowlands over a long duration of time. It is not happenstance that sheep husbandry and shepherding were accompanied by the great spread of the *salamuri*, a shepherd instrument in this region (audio ex. 3). The complex and exhausting journey undertaken by shepherds and their families twice a year – from the mountains to the lowlands, and then back up to the mountains – had its own repertoire. It can be said that a genre appeared in fact through this form of migration in Tusheti: there are poems and songs associated with stories that took place along the way (audio ex. 4), travel tunes to be performed on accordion played by Tush women going on this journey (audio ex. 5); a woman’s place in the traditional Tush way of life and folklore is quite exceptional.

⁶ It is worth noting that “*Deel*” is the name of the most supreme being in the pantheon of Vainakh divinities. The goddess of hunting in Svan mythology is called “*Dali*”.

It's a fact that women also actively participated in Tush domestic agriculture along with the men. "Out of fieldwork their direct obligations consisted of field harvesting, mowing hay with a scythe, and with the men – raking the hay, threshing corn sheaves, winnowing the threshed corn, and putting the harvest into storage. In livestock care: sweeping cowsheds, milking cows, and making dairy products. One thing entirely of their concern was "housework", implying housekeeping, bringing water, baking bread, preparing food, milling flour, taking care of family members, and guiding quite labor-intensive handicrafts (processing wool, weaving, sewing, dyeing). Out of those pursuing domestic cottage industries, Tush women do not fall behind others in the Caucasus (Itonishvili, 2012: 85)". Notable among their forms of music making are traditional cradle lullabies and laments, instrumental tunes performed with exceptional mastery on accordion, and songs of various content (patriotic, mourning, romance, festive) performed to the accompaniment of this instrument.

A kind of shining jewel of Tush women's repertoire is singing laments. It is a genre implying remembering a deceased person in song (with or without an instrument), with these works not directly being a part of the mourning ritual. They are performed at any other time. Immense sorrow and sadness have become the sources of inspiration for these songs, with tragic stories as their foundations. The stern disposition of these people is apparent in social relationships with inhabitants of the Caucasus mountains, frequently expressed in humble accounts with restrained feelings and emotions. Tusheti is exceptional in this regard. Expressions of sorrow had their own limits here; excessive mourning was considered shameful. Perhaps the abundance of singing laments, charged with great pain, and having impressionable lyrics and melodies in this region is stipulated by this (audio ex. 6). Lament melodies, also called "voices" by Tush women, have also been transformed into instrumental tunes on the accordion.

Heroic subject matter occupies an integral place in Tush music. The Tush have been known as warriors since time immemorial, therefore their remarkable relationship with patriotic themes is not at all surprising. Tusheti's history and the fighting spirit of a warrior people are conveyed in such songs. Belonging to this type of song are "Shamilis dacheris simghera" ("The Song of Catching Shamili"), "Jokolas simghera" ("Jokola's Song"), "Diklos aokhreba" ("The Destruction of Diklo"), etc. A ballad poem "Tushtagan gurias mosvla da rcheva vitar iomon osmalta da simghera cholokis spaspetsa zeda" ("Coming to Guria from Tusheti, Advice on How to Fight the Ottomans, and a Song About Choloki's Commander-in-Chief") printed in the *Kavkaz* newspaper in 1854, is worth separate note (Кавказ, 1854: 1–3). Apart from its significant age, the work is also interesting since the hero and historical figure Khasan Tavdgiridze of the song "Khasanbegura" widespread and popular in Guria and Achara is mentioned within it.

There are also wedding songs among the Tush musical genres called "maqrulis" by the Tush, like how they are called by representatives of other Georgian regions. These songs were performed when taking a bride from her father's house, on the way, taking her to her new family, and at a supra.

Some Tush songs are performed with instrumental accompaniment. This region's instrumentarium is quite diverse. Reedless and reed salamuris, panduris, and chianuris are found in Tusheti. There is also the balalaika introduced from the north, called a "balalaika" by the Tush, and the accordion, part of the Tush musical identity, which were introduced later and became established among the instruments. The repertoire accompanying the traditional Tush way of life is brought together by some specific musical peculiarities and they form an independent dialect.

As representatives of Georgia's eastern mountains, the Tush, like their neighboring Khevsurs and Pshavs, have exceptional skills in poetry. They possess an inherent talent at conveying something seen and experienced in a poem, singing this poem from the depths of their heart, and turning it into a song. It is true that a large share of traditional music genres is no longer a part of the modern way of life, still they continue to exist on stage and in the repertoires of traditional music ensembles, another share is kept in folklore archives and awaits its own performers.

The Peculiarities of the Tush Musical Language

The first audio collection of traditional Tush music dates to the year 1929 and belongs to the composer Shalva Mshvelidze (Tsurtsunia, 2006: CD).⁷ Chronologically following this are some songs and instrumental tunes recorded by musicologist Shalva Aslanishvili in 1947 (ibid, CD 7).⁸ Fieldwork for studying Tush music became more intensive in the following decades. The ethnomusicological study of this region continues to this day.

With its own stylistic peculiarities, the Tush musical language appears to be extremely original on the Georgian musical dialect map. In the work *Georgian Musical Dialects and Their Interrelationships*, some specific features characterizing the music of this region are named by ethnomusicologist Edisher Garakanidze: "A melodic structure based on a secundal principle of development, characteristic motion from the mode's fourth tone to the fifth with accentuation of the latter and then a downward descent, frequency of quintal melodies, extensive repetition of the tonic pitch during cadences, monody, the important role of unison singing, a unique manner of performance (Garakanidze, 2011: 38)". These listed musical parameters are characteristic of all the primary genres of Tush musical folklore.

The Tush song repertoire is split into two parts in Georgian ethnomusicological literature – songs of the old and new format (Aslanishvili, 1956, Garakanidze, 2011). Based on data found in his fieldwork done in Tusheti in the 1940s, elderly people are named as performers of the old format by Aslanishvili, here he notes that most of them are constant residents of Tusheti (Aslanishvili, 1956: 96). The young people, however, are performers of songs in the new format, and simultaneously considered creators as well: "Instead of ritual, heroic, and shepherding adventure songs, the young generation writes songs of a lyrical, especially romantic nature, and songs about World War II (ibid.: 118)".

Songs of the new format are intonationally based on those of the old format. Despite this, they are different from each other and the reason for this discrepancy is not just the thematic subjects. Differences are manifested in the structure, performance forms, manners, and in the polyphony; the accordion plays a significant role in the new format repertoire. Songs of the new format, in comparison to old songs with a recitative, serious, narrative character and less emphasized metric accents, are distinguished for the quadratic construction of strophes, a more distinctly sharp metricity, and not so infrequent dance-like quality. The singing manners are also disparate: old songs are performed much more calmly, in a quiet voice, with songs in the new format, however, being characterized by a more gallant, expressive performance manner (audio example 7). In comparison to songs of the old format, where there are generally the

⁷ "Voices from the Past". A Georgian folk song from wax recording cylinders, 2006, CD 2.

⁸ Ibid. 2007, CD 7.

gender regulations typical of Georgian music, and men's and women's genres are delineated from each other, preference is given to women's performance in the new format. Even the accordion is primarily considered a women's instrument and Tush women are renowned for their performance mastery on it. Old format songs are monodic, with most solo and unison performance forms being found. In examples of the new format, there are frequent occurrences of the basic melody being arranged to the driving middle voice, the bass, and the top voice.

How possible is it to associate the appearance of new format songs and the gradual obsolescence of the old ones with the Tush migration – resettlement from the mountains to the lowlands (Kakheti)? The changes taking place in Tush music cannot simply be explained by migration. For example, it is logical to associate the polyphonic rendering of Tush songs into three voices with Tush having to live in Kakheti, surrounded by the Kakhetian musical dialect. Three-voice polyphony is really one of the basic rules of this dialect in the Eastern Georgian lowlands, but in all, the structure, melodic, meter, rhythms, performance form or style present in the new format and different from songs in the old format – seem to be part of a general trend that progressed among the North Caucasian people bordering Tusheti as well. In both cases, two of the main reasons bringing about these changes must be the adaptation and great popularity of the accordion in this geographic area.

The topic of polyphony in relation to Tush music also especially captures one's attention. First off, it is due to the solo and unison singing traditions less characteristic of traditional Georgian music occupying a large place in this region.

It is not by chance that a question is frequently heard during interviews with storytellers in expedition recordings of Tush music – “Did Tush songs have a bass part in older times or not?” The answer is not so simple. Some people say songs did not have any bass part in the past, with others, however, confirming the existence of a bass part. Or there is the supposition, although it is often vague, a functionally different voice is implied by the bass, or an accompaniment in unison⁹.

The existence of a 7th step below the tonic in the Tush “Dala” melody has not remained beyond the focus of Georgian ethnomusicologists, being perceived as a “hidden” harmonic function. This occurrence is viewed by Aslanishvili as a germ of a new harmonic function (Aslanishvili, 1956: 110). For ethnomusicologist Natalia Zumbadze, however, the existence of a 7th step in the “Dala” melody is a direct argument for a lost polyphony (Zumbadze, 2018: 230).

In determining the reasons for the existence of the tradition of unison singing in Tush songs, some parallel studies of Tusheti and the neighboring cultures bordering it might be greatly beneficial. The tradition of solo and unison singing is also quite characteristic of the people of Dagestan living on the border of Tusheti.

⁹ Recorded by ethnomusicologist Kakhi Rosebashvili in Omalo Village in 1965, 89-year-old Giglo Kikilauri emphasizes that songs did not have a bass part in times past: “First one person would sing the words, then a second would repeat with the same thing”. Samson Inauri, a 63-year-old resident of the same village, notes, “In our area, they sang more in unison, there was no bass”. Tina Abaidze, an accordionist from Shenako, adds however, that earlier songs beseeching the weather accompanied by a bass part were performed (the expedition material is kept at the Tbilisi State Conservatoire Grigol Chkhikvadze Ethnomusicology Lab Archives. Reels #161a and 162b). Recorded by Nino Maisuradze in Pankisi Gorge, a Tush accordionist responds to the question: “Did you have a bass voice in Tusheti from the very beginning or was it introduced after the accordion? She responds, “I don't know, we probably knew it at the start”. (Expedition material is kept at the Ivane Javakhishvili Institute of History and Ethnology Archives.)

Tusheti's Neighborhood

There has never been just a single way from Tusheti to Kakheti for Tush shepherds. They have always had a close relationship with the Caucasian neighbors. There was animosity and friendship: "To this day, the Tush remember the so-called Lezgian trails by which they crossed over into Dagestan from where they drove kidnapped livestock. Banditry in Tusheti was the same sort as it was among other Georgian and North Caucasian Mountain people, although there were other roads and trails that served for peaceful relations with Georgia's mountainous regions, as well as with the North Caucasian countries of Chechnya and Dagestan (Itonishvili, 2012: 44)". When talking of the Tush's relationship with their North Caucasian neighbors, E. Tataraidze shared with me a deeply engrained memory from her childhood: A Lezgian family having come over from Dagestan to work in Shenako was unable to cross back over the mountains to their homeland before the onset of winter and had stayed the spend the winter in the village. At the very beginning of spring, their relatives came to check up on them. Dressed up in colorful clothing with women and children, balalaikas, and accordions, the Lezgians had suddenly shown up coming from the mountains. Joyful shouting and yelling broke out when the guests and those meeting them saw each other, for three nights the Tush village listened to them playing music and singing. Who knows how many similar stories the lives of Caucasian mountain people have seen? How many stories have traveled and crossed the geographical or cultural borders between Georgia and neighboring countries? The Tush recorded during field studies also speak of Lezgians having come down to work in Tush villages¹⁰. Recordings of Lezgian songs also figure in S. Aslanishvili's 1947 collection (performers unknown).

Most Georgian and North Caucasian peoples are indigenous inhabitants of the Caucasus. Any cultural innovation between these peoples is stipulated by genetics and being long-term neighbors. In the middle of the past century, Georgia became a center of Caucasian studies, especially in the field of linguistics. Unfortunately, the North Caucasus was turned into a kind of closed space due to the geopolitical reality extant in the 1990s. Based on this, there is a fervent need for comparative musicological studies.

Dagestan borders East Tusheti, with Chechnya and Ingushetia being to the north. Audio recordings of traditional Dagestani, Chechen, and Ingush music are less accessible to Georgian ethnomusicologists. From this standpoint, the National Archives of Georgia owns the largest collection. This is material recorded by the Melody Company in the 1960s–70s. The recordings are not found in field studies, most of them had been conveyed by national singers and instrumentalists popular in these countries during that period, i.e., they reflect secondary performances and do not create a fully complete picture regarding the older layers of traditional music. Music score collections published in various years, and naturally, those works devoted to Caucasian musical folklore, are also important for comparative research.

Regarding the traditional music of these people, named among the primary peculiarities of Chechen and Ingush melodies in academic literature are the sequential development of a descending melodic type, frequent repetition of the tonic at the ends of phrases, melodies frequently ending up within the range of

¹⁰ When Kakhi Rosebashvili asks whether the Tush sang anything while working or not, G. Kikilauri responds, "The Lezgians sang while working and we listened to them". T. Abaidze recalls some occurrences of acquiring accordions from Chechens and Lezgians (expedition material is kept at the Tbilisi State Conservatoire GCEL Archives, reels #161a and 162b.).

a fifth or fourth (Iakubov). In frequent cases, similarities between Tush and Vainakh music are stipulated precisely by these characteristics. Ethnomusicologist Nino Maisuradze writes concerning Georgian, Chechen, and Dagestani (Lezgian, Kumyk) songs being related through melodic structure and sequential development (2015: 245–260). A likeness is noted in instrumental music as well (Shilakadze, 2007: 171, 180). Along with the melodic characteristics, a bass line having two harmonic functions (VII–I) and cadential turns also make the two and three-voice Chechen and Ingush songs related to Georgian music. Like Georgian music, endings on fifths, and oftentimes fourths are found among the final song intervals.

As evident from the musical material, similar musical processes developed in countries bordering Tusheti beginning from the 2nd half of the 20th century. Two layers of songs – in the old and new formats – appeared. Examples that were a part of the old way of life were gradually dominated by songs written on modern themes, with traditional instruments also being supplanted by the accordion. Even some local types of accordions were created. By the way, just like in Tusheti, women are also distinguished for their accordion performance mastery in Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan, they are oftentimes themselves the composers and writers of songs and melodies performed (Дзахарова, 2021).

According to the best-known and most widespread idea, the accordion was introduced into the Caucasus via Russia. Different suppositions have also been expressed – researcher and performer Nikoloz Jokhadze connects the spread of the instrument to German colonies in the Caucasus (Jokhadze, 2018: 507). Questions concerning the origins of the accordion have also been asked many times in field research conducted with the Tush, although it appears later when any precise knowledge as to when and where from this instrument appeared in this region is already no longer retained by the collective memory. Anyway, it is a fact that the accordion and its types¹¹ became native instruments to the Caucasian mountain people over the course of time.

For a comparative study of Georgian and Chechen-Ingush music, some recordings of traditional music by the Vainakh-Kist people who had resettled en masse in the 19th century in Pankisi Gorge, Georgia, is quite valuable, which is kept at archives at the Georgian Institute of History and Ethnology, Tbilisi State Conservatoire Grigol Chkhikvadze Ethnomusicology Lab, and Folklore State Center. It is clearly demonstrated by the material how the densely settled Kist preserved their musical language and antiquities, being far from their homeland.

Concerning the traditional music of Kist living in Georgia, ethnomusicologist Maia Gelashvili notes in an article that the folk, as well as the sacred music of the Kist bear all the features characterizing the musical language of the Chechens and Ingush (Gelashvili, 2012: 157). Apart from a two-centuries-long cohabitation in Georgia, the strong genetic links between these people and being centuries-long close neighbors must also be named as reasons for this closeness.

Along with the similarities, some discrepancies are also shown when observing the musical folklore of the Tush, Kist, Chechens, Ingush, and Dagestanis, manifesting themselves in some specific attributes of the musical language (scales, chord structure, meter, rhythm), song performance manners, instrument

¹¹ Some local types of accordions made by local instrument makers appeared after the spread of the instrument throughout the Caucasus. There are four basis types of Caucasian accordions: Georgian, Azerbaijani, Circassian, and Ossetian (Jokhadze, 2018: 508).

construction, and playing styles. In order to thoroughly study the traditional music of Georgia and the North Caucasus, to show the musical features common and differences between them, nothing can replace collaborating with scholars from these countries themselves. Some interesting ways of studying the topic will be shown by complex studies and mutually sharing their findings.

Life in the Lowlands

The Tush also brought their traditional rituals and customs from the mountains down to the lowlands. Migration had not really endangered their musical identity; they even preserved the folklore of their native region being surrounded by the Kakhetian musical dialect. Clearly, with the music being separated from its roots, it became one of the powerful symbols of a densely settled society longing for their place of permanent residence.

Naturally, the general trends brought by modernity and influencing the thoughts and ways of life of traditional societies also affected the Tush settled in Alvani, like other Georgian regions. In this case, some significant changes were brought about by a weakening of the shepherding tradition, a growth in the interests held by members of the socius, particularly the youth, new migrations from Alvani to larger cities in Georgia, or abroad. A generation for whom singing, playing music, or dancing, and the knowledge of old stories, legends, or mythological accounts were much more organic was gradually replaced by a generation possessing less of this information. Like other regions of Georgia, music has almost totally left its traditional ways, with the stage becoming a natural place for it to function.

From the 2000s to this day, the folklore ensembles of Keselo and Tsovata have been active in Zemo Alvani, the repertoire of whom consists of traditional Tush songs. A significant contribution to the popularity of Tush music was made by songwriter and performer Lela Tataraidze starting in the 1970s. Her songs, which she performs herself with exemplary mastery on the accordion, stem from the traditions of Tush music. Because of this, her songs are often deemed as folk songs and not original compositions (video example 3).

In 2015 the NGO Tusheti Brand was founded in Akhmeta, whose priorities include increasing motivation among those employed in the culture sphere in the municipality, developing cultural economies, popularizing, and internationalizing the local ethnoculture, and democratizing leadership in the culture sector. The creation of the organization was preceded by various types of activities implemented through volunteers laying the foundation for the creation of Tusheti Brand's local archive. Stored in this archive are works, photos, videos, and audio recordings of traditional folklore. Through support from the Tusheti Development Fund, the Folklore House was founded in 2015 per the archive database, the goal of which is to study works of traditional musical folklore and involve the youth in the process (Margvelashvili [ed.], 2020). Tush children getting to know and study the musical traditions of their native region through authentic sources are among the students at the Folklore House, which is quite crucial for the preservation and viability of these traditions.

Tush songs played on the accordion enjoy immense popularity among performers and listeners of traditional Georgian music. These songs and melodies are also performed with great pleasure in other regions of Georgia. Tush singing also holds an important place in stage practice, especially in the reper-

toires of women's ensembles in the capital and regions.

The popularity of traditional Tush music will, first, be stipulated by its originality. It seems to be at a cultural crossroads, having an openness to References neighboring nations and the ability to have intense relations with them greatly facilitated the existence of the unique Tush musical culture.

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Please see the QR codes for video and audio examples



CHAPTER 6

GEORGIAN TRADITIONAL POLYPHONY AND MODERN MUSICAL TRENDS

THE LAYERS OF GEORGIAN NATIONAL MUSIC AND THEIR STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

Traditional Georgian music is distinguished by a clear, original expressiveness from among the stylistic manifestations of world ethnic music. Therefore, it is not surprising at all that the main arteries feeding general Georgian music culture are Georgian singing and chanting. But today in Georgian musicology there is not such a definite concept regarding the influential quality of the characteristic elements of traditional music on various musical stylistic trends within the Georgian musical realm. The aim of the current article is to discuss this topic in particular. Even an attempt at the “gestaltization” of some identifying factors will be of beneficial intent to us.

In general, the social intentions of the society interested in the music of Georgia seem fascinating regarding the phenomenon deemed Georgian polyphonic singing at home or abroad. To what extent is this phenomenon a museum exhibit, and to what extent – a source of creative inspiration (Tsurtsumia, 1997: 16)? Which facets of this phenomenon do musicologists and amateur enthusiasts of this music focus on? This is not a question satisfied with just a single answer. From this angle, we might possibly be able to see how musical creative values have changed over the course of the last two centuries (unfortunately we cannot go further into the past); as well as to what extent polyphonic musical thought has become the very essence of a Georgian (it is usually spoken of as something “genetic”) (according to a sharp-witted phrase by Zemtsovsky, the Georgians are really “homo polyphonicuses”, Zemtsovsky 2003: 9).

To get close to answering these questions, it is necessary to constrain and analyze the phenomena. I think conceptualizing the musical profile of Georgian ethnic music today as the result of a divergent process will be of help, where some kinds of musical layers might be abstracted. Moreover, marking those intonational “streams” and their “reflections” forming these layers is possible.

This latter method will bear some fruit for us, and therefore, before I do a review of the folkloric or liturgical musical layers of the modern Georgian musical space, we will attempt to single out their “museums” – the intonational components of singing, chant, and instrumental melodies expressing the essence of traditional Georgian music. These are the main structural elements of unified or differentiated Georgian musical layers. They are called “patterns” here and we shall try to consider them as a kind of concept that must be successful from the aspect that this kind of invariant concept, apart from some contour or form, might also be interpreted as sets worked out through creative principles.

So then, the elements of the layers of traditional Georgian music imparting clearly original nuances to Georgian singing or chant are implied in the term “traditional musical patterns”. By using and developing such motifs, modes, and rhythmic, harmonic, textural, and creative elements, musical works are given an original appearance by which they are identified as being “Georgian” (Gabisonia, 2022: 8). These features are a manifestation of a kind of identical singularity bearing a single specific meaning

through a phenomenological approach (Telcharova, 1991: 42). Bruno Nettl calls a similar phenomenon “a conceptualized musical unit, a kind of tourist” (Nettle, 2022: 119), whereas these Georgian phenomena are called “creative standards turned into a solid tradition” by Rusudan Tsurtsumia (Tsurtsumia, 2020: 226).

Clearly, an abstraction of such elements from a common musical fabric cannot avoid being seen subjectively. Neither do we have any instruments with similarities in authentic and produced musical components, therefore the thoughts expressed here provide more of a direction for discussing this topic, than clear steps of a study.

Of course, traditional Georgian music, when being broken down into a spectrum of musical expression methods within all three of its stylistic facets, offers a dizzying array of colors. Despite that, for example, even from the aspect of rhythm, that this common Georgian massif might not be of such exceptional worth as it is regarding polyphony.

By accounting for scale and specificity, we will split the patterns of traditional Georgian music into two groups: **local** and **conceptual**. In the first one, specific intonational, articulatory elements are implied, whereas original layers synthesized through various creative principles are in the second.

From this position, we will list our versions of Georgian musical patterns:

Polyphony

- **Conceptual patterns:** three-voice polyphony (the main concept of Georgian polyphony rendering even foreign melodies into something “Georgian” (Chkhikvadze, 1961: 6); Gurian-Acharan four-voice polyphony; the drone polyphony of long Kartl-Kakhetian table songs; the contrastive voice leading of Gurian trios, festive chants, and ornamented chants of the Shemokmedi and Gelati schools; a continuous and repeating ostinato bass line; a parallelistic framework of the outer voices in chants; the interphasic fragments of parallel voice leading of all three voices in the folk songs of various regions; heterophony in the Megrelian “Harira”).

- **Local patterns:** parallelism of upper voices, a drone bass, the ornamented middle voice in Svetitskhoveli school chants, caller refrains, the dialogue of the upper voices over a continual bass drone in Kartl-Kakheti.

Articulation

- **Conceptual patterns:** the restrained sonorities of Svan hymns; the grace-note-like pitch production of Gurian songs (“Gurian pizzicato”); Tush, Kakhetian, and Megrelian tremulations, Megrelian glissandi like short “sighs”.

- **Local patterns:** krimanchuli, shemkhobari, Kartl-Kakhetian turns, the falling of a voice at the ends of phrases in Gurian-Acharan work songs.

Melody

- **Conceptual patterns:** the sequencing of Tush songs, a discrete melody in Svan hymns.

- **Local patterns:** “Iavnana” type melodies (Aslanishvili, 1954: 101); the rising tetrachords of

wedding party songs (Western Georgia); primarily Gurian melodic figurations without any jumps expressed through asemantic vocalizations; melodic figurations containing Gurian bass leaps; gruppetto type singing in chants and songs; augmented seconds in oriental melodies.

Modal-Harmonic Peculiarities

- **Conceptual patterns:** modal tones mostly in chants and partially in songs, secundal modulatory movement in Kartl-Kakhetian table songs and some songs of other regions, the eastern mountain Phrygian mode, urban hybrid songs infused with European harmony, hybrid, Eastern songs and tunes rendered in three voices, an accent on quartal harmony (the quartal-quintal chord – “the Georgian trichord” (Arakishvili, 1950: 32), tonic on the fourth, an accent on quintal harmony (cadences on a fifth, quintal nonachord), secundal harmonic steps, symmetry of harmonic steps (I. , 1989: 63), quintal (in the west) and quartal (in the east) diatonic (Gogitishvili, 2011: 5), inner, quintal cadences, and quintal and unison final cadences in songs; inner, quintal cadences, and unison final cadences in chants.

- **Local patterns:** quartal-quintachords (the Georgian trichord, Arakishvili, 1950: 32) in songs, quintal nonachords in Shemokmedi school chants and Gurian songs, septal nonachords in chants, alternation between punctum and syncopation rhythm; Locrian and extended modes in oxcart songs (M. , 1971: 51); lower tertian harmonic-functional movement in the bass in “Chakrulo” type songs.

Rhythmic Organization

- **Conceptual patterns:** triple dance rhythm.
- **Local patterns:** alternation of syncopation and punctum (chorea and iambic) in Eastern Georgian round dance songs, the quintuple meter of “Khorumi”.

Dramatic Composition

- **Conceptual patterns:** the rhapsodic organization of cyclic work songs (primarily naduris), centonization (a method of binding phrases in chants and Gurian trio songs), couplet organization, refrain organization, single turn variation (primarily within the bounds of three pitches) in the songs of various regions (Khevsuretian, Kartlian, Kakhetian, Rachan, Svan, Megrelian, Imeretian, Acharan) and in the ornamented works of all three chant schools, improvisation in Gurian trio songs, a diversity of asemantic vocalization melodies, mixed with the meagerness of a verbal-textual melody; rhapsodic instrumental variation organization, instrumental accompaniment of a song.

- **Local patterns:** a responsorium in Eastern Georgian work songs and in Megrelian dance songs, antiphons in round dance and work songs, rapidly sung songs (“Tkham venakhi”, “Shara-shara”, “Erekheli”), three-phase contamination of Kartl-Kakhetian table songs (textual fragment – fragment with glossolalia – alternation of soloists).

Before we focus on the pragmatics of using traditional Georgian musical patterns, I think it won't be too much to bring forth some diachronic aspects of the Georgian musical language to better know the semantics of these features.

We have frequently adorned naduri or “Lile” songs with epithets of their archaic qualities, but less

is usually said regarding the features bringing about such impressions. Syncretism is named as such a feature by Tsurtsunia (Tsurtsunia, 2020: 56), but I think it will be beneficial to group the early and later folk musical layers through some other criteria.

Since historical information about Georgian folk music is extremely hard to find (although literary studies still have not taken any large steps in this direction), it would be a display of excessive self-confidence to talk about works of “archaic” and/or “classical folklore periods. But I still think it is possible to distinguish two groups – “early” and “later”.

What idiosyncrasies differentiate early and late Georgian folk music? Clearly, first of all, simplicity and complexity; although this factor is also regulated by the specifics of the genre here (Tsurtsunia, 2020: 47–55). Private genres (lullabies, laments, individual work songs) not intended for any presentation will always remain simple.

On the other hand, it is the factor of genre that is the effective divisor of earlier and later layers. Folk musical works associated with cults and customs are fixed with ritualistic markers and are distinguished by greater stability than carefree, prominent genres with an aesthetic function.

And yet, to orient the grouping of examples according to their age, it is better to not pick genres, but instead peculiarities of the musical language, because this will show us more of the result, whereas genres show more of the reason. Moreover, there is in fact no such genre having a simple musical language yet containing numerous and different works attested in the Georgian musical folklore socium.

I would consider the short duration of melodic phrases, and in connection with this factor, the number of dramaturgical phases during the development of musical thought as some of the identifying criteria of an old layer. There is an accepted idea in Georgian musical folkloristics that a descending melody in simple Georgian songs is mostly an indicator of archaicism. But I would not fully concur with this idea. On the contrary, it is logical to think that like the formation of colloquial language, musical statements increased in length in line with development.

In respect to the number of phases (in this word, phrases are primarily implied, but not repeated ones), the creative method of centonization – “phrasal binding” – characteristic of Georgian church chant, and with great probability, of a folk musical genre originating from it – humming songs (as well as festive church chants) demands a special approach. This compositional principle, representative of Christian liturgics, might have been established in Georgia many centuries prior, but the fact that today it is really only manifested in the Gurian musical dialect indicates that such a multiphasic quality might be a later phenomenon.

It is fascinating that when observing Georgian musical folklore from a diachronic position, it is possible for some kind of parallels with European music to be found. I have in mind development vectors going from monody to polyphony, and then from polyphony to homophony. Let’s observe the latter, which is associated in European music with the formation of functional modes from modality and the replacement of polyphony with individualized musical themes, which in itself grew into Baroque Classicism. A clear melodic contour with auxiliary accompaniment (in Georgian reality – with a bass) is combined with the greater colorfulness of harmonic functionalism.

Later layers of Georgian folk songs exhibit such an inclination, a parallel “stitching” of two voices

with a single melodic diagram over a choral bass, where one voice is a follower of the other (the traditional Georgian term is *mimkoli*), a kind of resonator, which by the way, is quite a typical creative method of common European “chordal”, homophonic polyphony. It must be noted that features of European major-minor functionalism also characterize a significantly large body of Georgian folk songs, with these songs being called “hybrid” songs.

Therefore, if we examine works of Georgian musical folklore through the aforementioned criteria of distinguishing the leveling of vocal contrasting differences and of harmonically functional contrasting discrepancies, it will be correct to separate such layers as “monoethnic” (or homologic) and hybrid parts.

As for Georgian song examples distinguished by the evident individualism of the voices (considering each separate voice, and not, for example, 2 out of 3 voices), we realize when observing them that they primarily belong to the old genres: cult, ritual, and work songs.

By the way, the compositional principles of Georgian folk polyphony, which in the opinion of most scholars are considered archaic – drone and ostinato – fit in well with the factor of vocal individuality.

Here it must be stated that clearly, the number of voices indicates “earliness” (even the previously mentioned drone or ostinato two-voice polyphony), but not always: Gurian-Acharan work songs are in 4 voices and are quite extensive, being of a cyclic construction. However, due to the vocal individuality and short phrase duration, it is to be more thought of within an “early” layer.

Thus, we focus on two basic features of early Georgian singing: 1. The short phrase (phase) duration and lower number of phrases, and 2. Vocal individualism within a polyphonic structure. This is clear. From a social standpoint, it would not be excessive to consider 3. The criteria for the timeliness of ritual musical genres as a third feature of being from older times.

What did we need to separate the layers of “early” and “later” folklore for? According to Zemtsovsky, “Folklore is rightfully called an art laboratory” (Zemtsovski, 1986: 89). Despite having the complete technological means today of playing any old or new musical work, “folkloricism” primarily subsists through the parameters of “later” folklore. It is difficult to say whether this inertia is the logical pursuit of a trend or the result of musical globalization; it seems, bit by bit, to be all these factors.

Now regarding the conformity of patterns and the versions reflected in their various layers: in my opinion, works of traditional Georgian music – their fragments or patterns – are used in the common Georgian musical space through the following methods: a. citation, b. clear patterns, c. transformation, d. allusion. Along with this a monoethnic foundation, foreign cultural influences, and innovative elements are also noticed in Georgian musical works, apart from Georgian patterns.

By considering the aforementioned, let’s put together a general picture of the reflection of these Georgian music patterns on various planes. For this, the layers of musical currents distinguished by Georgian national motifs, or already considered today as “Georgian” will be defined – apart from Georgian “monoethnic” traditional music. Clearly, traditional Georgian patterns sound out at varying levels within them, and we will try to indicate such connections – by considering the corresponding numbers are not always jointly characterized by the spectrum of these components:

Hybrid Layers of Traditional Georgian Music

- **Georgian urban songs** – Distinct patterns are primarily used here – three-voice polyphony, parallelism in the upper voices, figurations expressed with asemantic vocalizations, couplet organization, clearly European influences. This layer is proportionate with a modal harmonic conceptual pattern – “urban hybrid songs infused with European harmony”.
- **Festive chants** – Distinct and transformed patterns – contrastive voice leading, three-voice polyphony, Gurian pitch production like grace-notes expressed through asemantic vocalizations, primarily Gurian figurations without any leaps, gruppetto-type ornamentation in chants and songs, modal tones, inner quintal cadences and final unison cadences in chants, quintal nonachords in Gurian songs, centonization: the powerful influence of chant is not observed here, but rather an origin from chant itself is striking; monoethnic.
- **Duduk three-voice polyphony** – Transformed patterns: three-voice polyphony, parallelism in the upper voices, augmented seconds, “Iavnana” type melodies, drone polyphony of long Kartl-Kakhetian table songs, secundal harmonic steps, triple dance rhythm, couplet organization; clearly Oriental influences expressed in Eastern instrumental accompaniment as well.

Peripheral Layers of Georgian Ethnic Music

- **Bayatis** – Distinct Eastern melodic, modal, harmonic patterns, augmented seconds (also of non-Georgian origin); monoethnic (except non-Georgian).
- **Georgian Eastern instrumental, *panoghuri*¹ music** – transformed Eastern influence patterns – augmented seconds, secundal harmonic motion, couplet organization, triple dance rhythm.

Transformed and Innovative Layers of Georgian Church Chant

- **Eclectic Russian-Georgian chant** – transformed patterns – three-voice or four-voice harmony, parallelism in the upper voices, centonization, Russian influence.
- **Quasi-traditional original composed chants** – (Pavle Berishvili, Ioseb Kechakmadze, Ekvtime Kochlamazashvili, Edisher Garakanidze, Nodar Gigauri, Nun Mariami) – transformed patterns – three-voice polyphony, upper voice parallelism, quartal quintachords, quintal nonachords, secundal harmonic steps, parallel framework of outer voices in chants, ornamented middle voice in Svetitskhoveli school chants, gruppetto-type ornamentation in chants and songs, secundal modulational movement, European harmonic motion, quintal inner cadences and unison final cadences in chants, centonization – in fact, the patterns wholly characteristic of traditional chant, except combined in eclectic ways; monoethnic approach.
- **Original composed chants** – (Nino Janjghava, Givi Alaznishvili, Nana Mikaberidze) – allusive patterns – eclectic layer with Georgian chant and European intonational components; basically, an innovative method.
- **So-called Georgian-Byzantine chant** – (setting a Georgian text to Greek chant motifs) –

¹ It is difficult to translate this word simply, but these are songs making fun of, or roasting someone or something (trans.).

monoethnic (except non-Georgian).

- **So-called Old Syrian chant** – (the old Syrian origins of which are doubtful) – allusive patterns – continual drone characteristic of Kartl-Kakhetian table songs: probably an innovative method.

Non-traditional Branch of Georgian Ethnic Music – Ethno-music (World Music):

- **“Restored” Georgian folk songs** – (Valerian Maghradze, Tutarchela, the Keria Ensemble, and other experiments) – transformed patterns – three-voice polyphony (having the significance of being rendered in three voices), secundal harmonic steps (with the importance of adding a bass): monoethnic method. We suppose that it will be a fully legitimate view if restored folklore works are examined within the realm of traditional music.

- **Georgian folkloric original composed songs** – (Dzuku Lolua, Sandro Kavsadze, Vano Mchedlishvili, Varlam Simonishvili, Mariam Arjevnishvili, Artem Erkomaishvili) – a less innovative Georgian monoethnic layer, a product of natural development, distinct or slightly transformed patterns: modern works composed by following all the rules of the traditional musical language can also be considered within this set (the Gorda Ensemble, naduris by L. Veshapidze).

- **Georgian quasi-folkloric original composed songs** – (Kevkhishvili, Psuturi, Anzor Erkomaishvili) – Distinct, transformed, and allusive patterns: three-voice polyphony, drone bass, upper voice parallelism, Kartl-Kakhetian turns, the sequencing of Tush songs, “Iavnana” type melodies, secundal modulational motion in Kartl-Kakhetian table songs and in some songs of other regions, secundal harmonic steps, couplet organization, instrumental accompaniment: a mix of monoethnic and innovative methods.

- **Para-folklore** (Gabisonia, 2014: 39) – (Teona Kumsiashvili, the singing sisters of the Gogochuri, Zviadauri, and Nayeuri families, Davit Kenchiashvili, Mariam Elieshvili, Bani, Manana Menabde) – transformed patterns: elements analogous to Georgian quasi-folkloric author songs, a mix of monoethnic and innovative methods (abrupt alternations of major and minor).

- **Tbilisian urban songs** – transformed and allusive patterns, resulting from the development of hybrid urban songs, has a European influence and an innovative method (the fourth voice has been added).

- **Georgian Eastern stage music** – (Nino Chkheidze) – Allusive patterns: triple dance rhythm, innovative method.

Georgian National Music – A musical layer considered to be an original manifestation of Georgian musical culture, despite indirect connections to the patterns of traditional Georgian music.

- **Georgian academic music** – (Folkloric and chant motifs in the works of professional Georgian composers) – citations, distinct patterns, transformation, allusion; it can be said that many various patterns are used by Georgian composers, therefore it is better to point out such patterns not given due attention – Gurian-Acharan four-voice polyphony, continual and repeating ostinato bass, refrains by a caller, the discrete melodies of Svan hymns, single turn variation, a responsorium, the three-phase contamination of Kartl-Kakhetian table songs: monoethnic, influential (the creative methods of professional European music), and innovative approaches.

- **Georgian cinema music** – (Revaz Laghidze, Sul Khan Tsintsadze, Gogi Tsabadze, Archil

Kereselidze, Kvernadze, Kancheli) – citations, transformation, and allusion: three-voice polyphony, Iavnana type melodies, figurations with asemantic vocalizations, the eastern mountain Phrygian mode, urban hybrid songs imbued with European harmony, couplet construction, songs sung at quick tempos: innovative approaches.

- **Georgian bards** – (Inola Gurgulia, Otar Ramishvili, Jansugh Kakhidze) – allusive patterns of urban songs: innovative methods.

- **Georgian stage music** – (Orera, Dielo, Bermukha, Iveria, Via 75, 33a) – transformation and allusive patterns: upper voice parallelism, Gurian pizzicato, krimanchuli, Kartl-Kakhetian turns, Tush song sequencing, the rising tetrachord of wedding party songs, Gurian figurations with no leaps primarily expressed through asemantic vocalizations, augmented seconds in Oriental melodies, secundal harmonic steps, quartal quintachords, the quintuple rhythm of “Khorumi”, couplet construction, instrumental accompaniment of songs, songs sung at fast tempos: an innovative approach.

- **Georgian jazz-fusion** – (Temur Kvitelashvili, Giorgi Mikadze, Vakhtang Kakhidze, Davit Malazonia, the Shin, Egari) – transformation and allusion, improvisation on mostly Eastern motifs: an innovative method.

- **Georgian electronic music** – (Machaidze, Dzodzuashvili) – basically folkloric citations, allusion: an innovative method.

It is possible to make a few deductions from this list:

1. Some cases of hereditariness are seen in these various tendencies, or certain intermediary links with traditional Georgian patterns. For example: Georgian urban music is a direct precursor to Tbilisian urban music, quasi-folkloric author songs originate from folkloric author songs, whereas Georgian Eastern stage music is primarily an offshoot of the *duduk* and *panoghuri* style.

2. Georgian singing more naturally meshes with European modal harmony and melody than Eastern. Moreover, European influence layers exhibit more of a stylistic unity (major-minor harmony), than Asian influence (augmented seconds).

3. In the layers where a professional composer is the author (academic, cinema music, jazz fusion), folkloric patterns are employed using all four previously mentioned methods, in diverse, yet fragmentary ways.

Let's promote those layers where traditional Georgian musical patterns are demonstrated with exceptional intensity. These are restored and author songs, original composed (quasi-traditional) chants, para-folklore, jazz fusion, and in part, Georgian academic music, popular music, and electronic music.

Now let's examine a kind of emic approach in discussing folkloric patterns: it is interesting what is considered features characteristic of traditional music, or folkloric motifs by the previously mentioned performers and composers. It will turn out that in contrast to creative individuals with musical educations and experience, para-folklore performers having some principal attributes of folk art (unprecedented popularity, folkloric self-identification) consider such intonational turns that are clearly of a later innovative or transformed nature as peculiarities of the folk style. We will list some features here: excessive use of sequences typical of Tush melodies and perception of the according style as “the common mountain style” (frequently even the Khevsuretian style); the primacy of romantic themes, frequent oscillations

between major and minor sonorities, an eclectic synthesis of the European IV subdominant with the 7th step of the Georgian dominant... When we observe these features, it turns out that their initiation is primarily stipulated by the usage of a modern tuned instrument, the so-called “classic” panduri as an accompaniment to a solo melody. Such a modernized Georgian instrument, to say, the most “democratic” one, the panduri, creates a broad range of new modal, modulational possibilities.

It is fascinating that the harmonic progression described above – SIV-DVII-TI also characterizes some original composed, as well as “dilettante” chants, with the turn being perceived by music aficionados as a kind of kitsch. Here, a type of “contagious effect” (Medushevski, 1976: 37) is in operation, usually showing this harmonic progression as a dominant turn.

It must be pointed out that the creation of new works by combining folkloric motifs is approached much more delicately by experts of this layer, than by the “dilettantes”. The latter do not feel any discomfort from musical criticism, because there really is in fact no such criticism. Para-folklore performers have actually ignored the supporting official line (Folklore State Center, Conservatoire, Ministry of Culture) of folkloric music. As pointed out by Merriam, a listener’s reaction to music is largely governed by the situation and the listener’s role within it (Merriam, 1964: 144). Thus, “democratic” folklore music is oftentimes more popular than the “authentic”. In this regard, it is possible to call para-folklore folklore pop.

Yet one more typical detail: it is known that traditional Georgian songs and chants capture the attention through organized and multifaceted structures. It is natural to think that it is really the various creative methods of polyphony that might be the touchstone a Georgian music creative uses to convey an ethnic color. But such a priority, it may be said, is not clearly distinct – even during the contrastive Gurian jazz improvisations of the voices. But, at a glance, with some unclear motivation, it is more a creative intensity focused on isolated melodic development within the aforementioned realm. Therefore, the layer infused with Tbilisian, urban orientalist layers, in this aspect, appears more fertile, especially in ethno-jazz (still, justness demands it be pointed out that the national motifs in ethno-jazz are clearly pronounced in the non-folklore realm).

By the way, this trend is encountered with the very first classicist of Georgian music, Zakaria Paliashvili, who in the first decades of the 20th century switched from traditional folk motifs to working more on Eastern-urban motifs in the opera *Daisi*, following his unequalled opera *Abesalom and Eteri*.

It is interesting that the most memorable artistic images of national motifs – transformed patterns – have been preserved for us through vocal-instrumental ensembles of popular music (Orera, Bermukha, Iveria). The reason for this is partially that such works in most of their repertoires only bore a fragmentary character and did not obscure a free individual arena. Whereas among creative people, individualism is most clearly distinguished in the art of the Georgian “bards” – traditional Georgian patterns are quite rare in their work (with the exception of Jansugh Kakhidze). Here, the pop music of the last decades of the 20th century is being spoken of, and not modern pop music, which is prominent for a lack of Georgian motifs.

Here are some folklore patterns especially in demand within the realm of nontraditional music, such “Georgian motifs” as, in our opinion, melodies constructed on Gurian glossolalia, the VI–VII–I harmonic cadence, and quartal quintachords.

At this point, we will also point out some works where traditional Georgian patterns have been transformed with exceptional skill. We will not make an effort with works of professional Georgian music, regarding which we have less competency (Zakaria Paliashvili's *Abesalom and Eteri*, *Daisi*, Shalva Mshvelidze's *Zviadauri*, Taktakishvili's *Mindia*, etc.), whereas on the palette of the remaining trends would be "Tu ase turpa" and "Khokhbis kelivit" by Anzor Erkomaishvili, Jansugh Kakhidze's soundtrack for the film *Sherekilebi*, as well as some of his songs, "Krimanchuli" by the Orera Ensemble, "Khorumi" by the Bermukha Ensemble, "Shara-shara" by the Iveria Ensemble, "Ghvtivkurtkheuli kartveli eri" by Ioseb Kechakmadze, The Cherubic Hymn by Edisher Garakanidze, "Psalmunebi" by Nino Janjghava, folk jazz by the Shin, Giorgi Mikadze's improvisations, "Evropis kartuli himni" by Davit Malazonia...

In the end, it must be stated that the structural elements typical of the traditional Georgian unified or differentiated musical layers are presented quite meagerly in modern musical practice, which seems inappropriate to the significance of the international phenomenon of Georgian singing and chanting. Moreover, such traditional elements – patterns – frequently labeled as being folkloric, have been inadequately replaced by nontraditional elements in the perceptions of Georgian listeners.

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GEORGIAN SOVIET AUTHOR SONGS

An author song is a work composed on folk motives having a specific author. Through certain musical parameters, an author song demonstrates a connection to folk music thought. It is notable that the author's songs were active in Georgia before the Soviet era and afterward as well. Still, it must be stated that most author works are associated with the Soviet period. Some author works composed during the Soviet period will be discussed in this article, which I will provisionally call "Georgian Soviet author songs". At this stage, I will not touch upon author works composed in modern times which have been labeled by my colleagues as "pop-folk" (Lomsadze, 2021), "modernized folklore" (Razmadze, 2016–2017), and "para-folklore" (Gabisonia, 2015).

On the Topic of Defining an Author Song

To this day, no exhaustive definition for "author song" ("saavtoro simghera") has been ascertained in Georgian ethnomusicology. It must be stated that the term "author song" is still generally an original concept of Soviet (Russian) folklore studies.

In this case, the terminology associated with these songs was especially salient for me out of the various topics discussed in works devoted to Georgian Soviet author songs. Grigol Chkhikvadze was the one who dealt with this theme at the most fundamental level. Works composed during the socialist epoch are mentioned as "modern" and "Soviet" songs by the scholar (Chkhikvadze, 1970–71, 1971–72). Tamar Meskhi's works are also important. To characterize songs of the Soviet period, the researcher offers several different terms: "modern", "new", "of the Soviet structure", "of the new structure", etc. These terms are considered by Meskhi to be synonyms (Meskhi, 1990–91, 2001–02, 2002). A Georgian scholar from the subsequent period, E. Garakanidze mentions traditional works as "purely folk creations" to distance them from Soviet period songs (Garakanidze, 2007: 97); Nato Zumbadze, however, calls songs composed during the Soviet epoch as "Soviet period" and "new folk songs" (Zumbadze, 2002). As we have seen, the term "author song" is not used by any scholar. Tamaz Gabisonia (Gabisonia, 2019) and Otar Kapanadze (Kapanadze, 2019), researchers from a later period already resort to this term.

Frequently in older times, as well as in the modern era, author works would be mentioned as being folk. Stemming from this, there is no avoidance of a discussion on the problem of them being folk songs while working on a definition of author song.

We find such a definition of folk music in *Encyclopedia Britannica*: "folk music, type of traditional and generally rural music that originally was passed down through families and other small social groups. Typically, folk music, like folk literature, lives in oral tradition; it is learned through hearing rather than reading. It is functional in the sense that it is associated with other activities, and it is primarily rural in origin (Nettl, 2019).

Creators of the author's songs were mostly famous choirmasters: Varlam Simonishvili, Levan Mughalashvili, Piruz Makhatelashvili, Mariam Arjevnishvili, Ketevan Ghoghoberidze, Valerian Sadradze, Avksenti Megrelidze, Vano Mchedlishvili... The musical traditions of the region in which they were active were frequently represented by the choirmasters themselves. Most of the choirmasters of this generation had received no special music education, therefore, their songs were also composed using the rules of traditional music. This is probably frequently the reason why these works were almost always propagated under the term "folk". For example, the famous song "Tsintsikaro" is composed by Vano Mchedlishvili, "Dila" – by Varlam Simonishvili, and so on.

Today, songs composed by modern songwriters are circulating under the term "folk" with most of them having less of an affinity to traditional music rules; works being propagated through specific, established variants are also labeled as folk. Even modernized instruments created in the 20th century are mentioned as being folk instruments. In my opinion, it is necessary at the modern stage for works defined as "folk music" to be clearly delineated. It is important for there to be a distinction between what is called "folk" and what is called "author" music.

While working on this topic, the opinions of modern choirmasters were naturally of interest to me. Therefore, I conducted some anonymous internet polls with 67 choirmasters participating from all over Georgia. Participants ranged in age from 18–75: 18–25 – 5.1%, 25–35 – 35.6%, 35–50 – 35.6%, and 50–75 – 23.7%, respectively. Most participants (35.6%) had received an education at various institutions of higher education – 28.8% at the Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chanting University, 25.4% at Tbilisi State Conservatoire, whereas the least amount, 10.2%, at the Shota Rustaveli Georgian State University of the Theatre and Cinema in the Folk and Sacred Music Conducting department. Poll participants had to define what the term "author song" meant to them. I also asked them to answer some questions: "Did they themselves compose author songs in a folk style or did they perform author works composed by other choirmasters or not"? In both cases, I asked them to name some examples.

Per the question, "Have they composed author songs in a folk style or not"? most (83.3%) gave a negative response. Those providing a positive response, we can name "Naduris", "Alilo", "Simghera ts kaltuboze", some Megrelian songs "Vardis do chuchele", "Chkimi oropili chkim kholos", "Miorkini si koichku", etc., among some of the variants. One of the applicants named their own piano compositions as author songs. Some rearranged versions of Laz works were also found in the list of personal author songs: "Ele mele kismet", "Mzogha ucha", "Kulanishi destane", etc.

Per the question, "Have they performed the author works of other choirmasters or not"? most (68.9%) gave a positive response. Most of the examples named are really author songs composed by choirmasters: Varlam Simonishvili's "Dila", "Baghia chveni kvekana", Giorgi Iobishvili's "Natvra", Artem Erkomaishvili's "Khareba da gogia", "Tu ase turpa ikavi", "Mival guriashi mara", etc. Yet, some variants by choirmasters of traditional songs ended up on the author song list, for example, "Chven mshvidoba" by the Sikharulidze family, "Perad shindi" by the Berdzenishvili family, Vepkhia Antia's "Ia Patnepi", etc. Works by the composers Revaz Laghidze, Iakob Bobokhidze, and Nana Belkania also wound up in the same graph.

The choirmasters' definition of the term "author song" was exceptionally interesting. Most choir-

masters defined an author song as “one having a specific author”. I will cite several different definitions: “a non-collectively composed song by one person or a small group”, “not a folk song”, “an original work”, “a song written by a composer”, “a work written by a person, or a folklore work rearranged at such a level that the elements introduced by this individual exceed those of the folklore work”, etc. Out of countless definitions, two of them turned out to be the most acceptable to me: “a song composed in a folk style by a songwriter, even a nonprofessional one” and “a melody composed on folk motifs to their own poem or a folk one”.

When studying the issues of whether author songs classify as folk songs or not, it is important an answer is provided for the following questions: 1. What peculiarities characterize author works? 2. Do these peculiarities determine whether these compositions be labeled as folk or not? In this case, the main things are probably their musical, stylistic features.

The Musical, Stylistic Features of Soviet Author Songs

Author songs of the Soviet period are primarily synchronous types of polyphonic works. Tertian parallelism is frequent in the upper voices. There is a syllabic relationship between the verbal and musical text – each syllable is assigned one pitch. Due to the priority of the poetic text, recitative episodes are often found in these types of songs. Despite this, every voice sings the song text simultaneously, in synchronicity, naturally limiting any musical improvisation and somewhat hindering development (Audio ex. 1).

The comparatively mediocre level of development in Soviet-period songs is explained through another reason by Grigol Chkhikvadze: “Georgian choral folk songs of the Soviet period partially lack any broad development of musical thought, variation in rhythm and intonation, at a time when these are quite characteristic of old Georgian vocal folk art. This is caused by most modern songs being associated with the accompaniment of a panduri or chonguri. Due to the limited technical capabilities of these instruments, the songs are extremely restricted, not having any means of unfolding and developing, and are made homogenous. The fact that an entire array of songs is bereft of any dynamicity, melodic emotionalism, a rich harmonic language, and polyphony can be explained through this” (Chkhikvadze, 1981: 33).

The performance format of Soviet author songs deserves separate note. These works are distinguished by quite a diversity of performance formats. It seems due to the lower value of the musical text, special importance was given to performance forms. Here, such performance forms are found which are not characteristic of traditional folklore. Presented here out of the performance formats known in traditional folklore are alternations between a soloist and choir, between a trio and choir, as well as between two choirs. I consider such forms as when a song is begun by one soloist, then a second soloist joins in with a choir sounding out at the end to be typical of Soviet period works. There are also such cases when soloists and a choir sing simultaneously. The achievements of this epoch are duets and singing in two voices with instrumental accompaniment without any bass part, where the instrument functions in place of a bass part. The involvement of unison men and women’s choirs, or individual soloists in the middle of a song is also typical of Soviet period works, which are not found in traditional folklore.

A History of the Composition of Georgian Soviet Author Songs

The history of the creation of Soviet author songs in Georgia begins right off the bat during the Sovietization period – the 1920s. Revolutionary songs from the years 1905–07 are considered their precursors. According to Grigol Chkhikvadze, even during the October Revolution such works as “The Communards’ March”, “The Red Flag”, etc., were still performed. The French Revolution hymn “Marseilles” was especially popular, which was rearranged in three voices by Georgian revolutionaries and given a Georgian text (Chkhikvadze, 1981).

After the establishment of the Soviet government, singing was given a special role in preaching and reinforcing the Soviet ideology. It became necessary for vocal works reflecting the new life to be composed and spread. Since a song implies the union of a verbal and musical text, at first composing songs was associated with certain challenges. Therefore, at the first stage, texts reflecting the Soviet ideology were sung to the tunes of revolutionary songs introduced from Russia or already extant folk songs. Texts reflecting the Soviet spirit were also frequently appended to the ends of traditional works (reaping and hoeing songs). At the next stage, new melodies were already being composed.

It is known that the people’s way of life is always portrayed in folk songs. If we observe the author’s songs of the Soviet period, it will be seen that the socialist epoch ideology and people’s spirit are conveyed in these works. Glorification of the leader and the Party, praise of the socialist epoch, images reflecting the collective way of life, etc., are found in these songs. The work theme was especially pertinent, for example, the songs “Akh traktoro” (“Oh Tractor”), “Kombaineri da meabreshume” (“The Combiner and Sericulturalist”), “Mergoluris simghera” (“Field-team Leader Song”), etc.

It must be stated that the composition of Soviet-period author songs had its own function, determined by the Soviet Ideology. Their primary goal was to propagandize socialist ideals among the masses. This is why in similar types of works; preference was given to the verbal text instead of the musical.

The creation process of these kinds of songs is also fascinating, in line with political events, works of the Soviet period were often created on commission. In the beginning, of course, poems were written. Already at a later stage, special melodies were also composed for these texts. Frequently a song’s text and music had different authors. Works created in such circumstances were deprived from the natural, living environment of folklore creation and existence. Of course, all this was also reflected in their artistic value.

When studying Soviet author songs, I think the most important thing is defining their place in Georgian folklore. There were also some attempts at classifying Soviet songs as a separate genre; for example, in an introduction to an Acharan folk song collection, Vladimir Akhobadze mentions modern (those of the Soviet period are implied, S.K.) songs alongside works of historical, heroic, lyrical, wedding, and other genres (Akhobadze, 1961). Grouping songs of the Soviet period under the concept of “genre” is debatable. First off, works of such a type must be delineated from traditional ones and an entire array of peculiarities must be considered when studying them, like not having a specific way of life function, author ownership, the non-existence of variants in frequent cases, etc.

Classifying Soviet Author Songs

A properly complete classification of Soviet-period folk songs has still not taken place in Georgian ethnomusicology. Grigol Chkhikadze's annual publications in which works of this era were directly discussed should be considered attempts at doing so. Here, the vocal arts of the socialist era are grouped according to the poetic texts' thematic material. Each of the examples included in the various groups is examined individually by the scholar, although no common characteristics are highlighted by him. According to the author, there is an abundance of collective-farm and WWII themes in Soviet-period songs, as well as songs about war and socialist work heroes, leaders, etc. (Chkhikvadze, 1970–71; 1970–72; 1981) (Audio ex. 2).

For the time being, Otar Kapanadze has the only attempt at classifying Soviet-period songs according to musical material in the work *Georgian Soviet Folk Songs: Musical Language and Genre Foundations*. He divides the songs into four groups: 1. Works constructed on traditional song material, 2. Author songs having a maximally close affiliation to the traditional musical language, 3. Songs in which unnatural changes are different from traditional ones are noted in the musical text from a musical language or form standpoint, 4. Author songs being only somewhat approximated with traditional music (Kapanadze, 2019).

An attempt at classifying author songs is found in Tamaz Gabisonia's work *Georgian Songwriter's Folk Song of Soviet Epoch as a Victim of Authenticism*. Four stylistic tendencies of author folklore songs are singled out by the researcher:

1. Songwriter's music was created by Georgian choirmasters and adjusted to the traditional Georgian style. This tendency, which originated in the second half of the 19th century, still continues. It is oriented toward traditional folk melodies, types of vocal movements and performance methods;
2. Soviet Patriotic songs, with distinctive artistic means of expression and distinct enthusiastic style;
3. Folk-style songs composed by choirmasters, which create new standards and shape the melodies by using elements of Georgian intonation and articulation;
4. Folk-style songwriter's works are created by self-taught performers, often enriched by modern electronic arrangements. (Gabisonia, 2019: 195).

When working on author works of the Soviet period, I also attempted to sort of classify them in my master's thesis, in which I only used published sheet music. I did the classification primarily according to the verbal text and the songs' themes because as it is known, the verbal text is a much more crucial element in Soviet-period creations than the music. Eight thematic groups were singled out as a result of classification: songs about war and peace, songs about the Party, songs dedicated to the October Revolution, works having a collective farming theme, songs about geographical locations, Georgia, heroes, and leaders (Kotrikadze, 2013).

Soviet Author Songs in Various Archives

Most Georgian Soviet author songs exist in the form of phonographic recordings and are scattered about within various Georgian archives. Phonographic recordings of songs are found at the National Archives of Georgia, the Georgian Public Broadcaster Radio Fund, the Grigol Chkhikvadze *Laboratory of Ethnomusicology at Tbilisi State Conservatoire*... Through an initiative by the latter, an album of Soviet-period author songs was released a few years ago on which 28 works from expedition recordings of the years 1950–70 kept at the Lab Archives are presented. Most of the songs included on the CD are works from Western Georgia. As understood from the foreword, the audio quality was taken into account by the compilers (Otar Kapanadze, Natalia Zumbadze) along with the artistic value when selecting the recordings (Audio ex. 3).

Soviet-period author songs are also found in published sheet music collections of Georgian folk music. Still, the largest amount of notated material containing Soviet author songs is kept at the Folklore State Center of Georgia Archives.

It must be said that the author's songs of this era were not only devoted to Soviet thematic elements. Some notated manuscript material kept at the Folklore Center is especially interesting in this regard (around 200 works). A third of the songs have their authors indicated. Despite the authors of the remaining songs being unknown, they must still be examined as the author works. It is fascinating that choir-masters oftentimes not only composed, but they also rearranged certain works. Choirmaster rearrangements of traditional genres are found among the material at the Folklore Center, as well as songs bearing the titles of traditional songs, even though they are original compositions. Such works are "Satrpialo" by Valerian Sadradze, "Acharuli makruli" by Varlam Ninidze, "Kakhuri tirili" by Mariam Arjevnishvili, etc. It is interesting in this case as to how close they are to the rules of traditional music.

And finally, author songs in a folk style are also being composed by modern choirmasters. We can name Levan Veshapidze's harvest song "Basianura", specifically composed by him for the Basiani Ensemble, Giorgi Gordeladze's "Simghera guriaze", etc., as some of them. I think this trend attests to the vitality of folklore at the modern stage.

Conclusion

Despite certain works on this topic, I think Soviet Georgian author songs have not been appropriately studied to this day. The main problem, in my opinion, is defining their proper place in Georgian folklore. If their quite significant numbers in Georgian musical folklore are accounted for, this is not such a simple issue. First of all, it is important for original composed works to be separated from folk ones and that they be appropriately defined. This affects author songs composed in a folk style from the Soviet period as well as during the modern era. At present, no proper publications are providing an answer to the question as to what defines songs composed in the modern age (20th–21st c.) as being folk. This topic is pertinent for those active in modern performance as well. I attempted to highlight the musical, stylistic peculiarities characterizing these types of works as much as possible in the article, although it is necessary for a monographic study to be conducted in which the so-called criteria of the folk quality are established per an analysis of specific musical parameters. Work will continue on this topic.

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Please see the QR code for audio examples



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GEORGIAN TRADITIONAL POLYPHONY IN THE FOLK-FUSION STYLE

“How then can something old become new”?

“How can it not? An old thing can be revived, it’ll just be something different; it can’t precisely become like how it once was, but what difference does it make? It is better and more interesting if something changes. Let’s revive it, hang it up, and see what happens”.

“Yes, but what do we need it for”?

“This carpet is an entire history... Countless kinds of stories are hidden away within it... You and I are individual threads, together we form a small plait, with the other remaining threads however – an ornament”.

(Kharatishvili, 2019)

Introduction

I began thinking about the process of the traditional music revival in tandem with working on my doctoral dissertation and was so gradually encompassed by studying the revival process that even today, I have a direct association of traditional music to the revival of certain old cultural elements and presenting them in a new format. A dialogue between a grandmother and her grandchild (chanced upon in Kharatishvili’s novel) about restoring an old, traditionally woven carpet made me rethink the possibility (or inevitability) of reconceptualizing cultural elements with centuries-long histories, and presenting them in a new way, so they can be transformed into organic and pertinent attributes of our modern-day age. The grandchild’s query (embodying the new generation), “Yes, but what do we need it for”? – represents one of my main research questions formulated in a much more concentrated and simplified form. It is really interesting as to what historical or psycho-social factors stipulate our fascination with novel musical forms, particularly folk-fusion itself, originating as a result of the traditional Georgian music revival process. And as to how much our connection to this music (conscious or unconscious) is defined through our identity as “individual threads” genetically creating and bearing Georgian traditional music (element making up folk-fusion).

To answer these questions, my article aims to define the folk-fusion musical direction within the context of traditional music revival and examine similar musical units in the world; to show the genesis of Georgian folk-fusion and the development of its earlier stages within the historical dynamic; analyze the interest in folk-fusion and the motivations of those performing it, and finally, understand this music within the context of expressing a national identity. The work is based on empirical data found within my doctoral study and in the subsequent years, and on a broad array of academic works.

The Georgian Traditional Music Revival Process and Folk-fusion as Its Modern Manifestation

Folk music functions in various forms throughout the modern world (including in Georgia). These forms arose as a result of the folk music revival process and created several types of existence in the modern age.

American ethnomusicologist Tamara Livingston, one of the pioneers in studying the music revival process, offers the following definition of this phenomenon: “Any Social movement with the goal of restoring and preserving a musical tradition which is believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past” (Livingston, 1999: 68). Despite the music revival being defined in Livingston’s take on it as being a social movement focused on the restoration and preservation of musical traditions in danger of being gradually lost, it is simultaneously conformant with the modern processes taking place in Georgian folk music. It’s true that due to the continuous development of the tradition, Georgian folk music has no need to be restored, but the process of preserving this music and thus, avoiding any risk of it being lost have especially been active over the past few decades in Georgia. Thus, today the trends in Georgian folklore come across as local expressions of the universal process of folk music revival.

Three basic forms emerged as a result of the Georgian folk music revival process. These are stage folklore; originally composed works with folk flavor, so-called “pseudo-folklore” defined as “pop-folk” by us; and Georgian folk-fusion music representing a musical corpus created as a result of a synthesis of traditional music and Western popular music genres (jazz, rock, pop, electronic music, etc.). It can be said that the latter is characterized by the greatest stylistic diversity.

It must be pointed out that the term folk-fusion is not used anywhere in ethnomusicological publications. Neither is it found in Wikipedia, where it has been replaced by the “contemporary folk music” term. The latter primarily brings together the American folklore revival process and musical symbioses originating from it. Despite a lack of sources, it must be said that the term folk-fusion is still present on the internet and is mentioned in the cases of musicians from various world regions (Indo-Welsh jazz-fusion, Balkan folk-rap, etc.) as, “a category that aims to capture the vast body of work that artists who reimagine traditional genres are creating (Estaff, 2018)”.

Several terms denoting a similar musical symbiosis of folk-fusion are found in modern ethnomusicology or the music industry. The most widespread among them is “world music”. After getting to know some ethnomusicological literature it can be deduced that world music is a product of industrial commercialized music wrapping up modern expressions of traditional music elements under the name of world music from the perspective of market values. Still, it must be clearly pointed out that despite the convergence of the growth and development factors of world music and folk-fusion, there are essential differences between these two musical styles. All this is distinctly expressed in Carl Rahkonen’s definition, a professor from Indiana University: “World music might best be described by what it is not. It is not Western art music, neither is it mainstream Western folk or popular music. World music can be traditional (folk), popular, or even art music, but it must have ethnic or foreign elements. It is simply not our music, it is their music, music which belongs to someone else (Rahkonen, 1994: XX)”.

Rahkonen’s approach that world music is “their” music and not “ours”, and that it brings together traditional music elements from various other countries within a single work, are already sufficient reasons to disregard this term when defining the musical entity discussed in our study, containing traditional Georgian mu-

sic elements. Thus, in place of world music we've established the term "folk-fusion", which has conformed directly to the Georgian musical reality and with some level of completeness, expresses its fundamental essence – a synthesis of traditional Georgian music and various popular music trends having Western roots.

One other term can be thought of as synonymous with folk-fusion, the "post-folklore" widespread in the Baltic countries (Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia). This term was first introduced in 1993 by the Lithuanian band *Ilgis*, which neither fits in a folk performer category nor a pop group with its creative output. This was a group that wrote original compositions combining the sound of acoustic guitars with folklore instruments (Boiko, 2001). Considering the group's popularity and authority, post-folklore was then actively assimilated by Latvian-Lithuanian groups having similar musical styles. Still, it cannot be said that this term could be an exact analogy to folk-fusion, as the post-folklore style does not conceptualize within itself all the musical diversity covered by our term folk-fusion.

The Historical Path of the Conception and Development of Georgian Folk-fusion

When discussing Georgian folk-fusion from a historical perspective, we must consider that this musical trend's conception and early development (from the 1950s to the 21st century) were directly influenced by the political courses and sociocultural reality extant within the country. A reflection of all this was the musical processes, initiatives, or experiments taking place in step with the national independence movement protesting the Soviet regime. Even more so if we account for the nature of folk-fusion. Two of the characteristics of its genre components – traditional and popular music (especially rock, hip-hop, and alternative genres) – are the direct reflections of society's present state and its response to it.

It can be said that Georgian folk-fusion was conceived within the context of Soviet popular music, called "Estrada". As we know, every kind of "frivolous", "entertaining" music in the Soviet world was really brought together in the Estrada category (in opposition to classical, so-called "serious" music). Yet, Georgian Estrada music formed into a different and original musical style within the tremendous space of the Soviet Estrada, with one of its stipulating factors becoming the synthesis of Georgian folklore elements in popular music works. Thus, despite the unrefined sound of locally produced electronic instruments and the influence of widespread Russian pop hits characteristic of Soviet music, Soviet Georgian music managed to find an original niche (Tskitishvili, 2014: XX).

A mixture of various musical styles was represented by the Soviet Georgian Estrada, including jazz, rock, and orchestrated, arranged Georgian folklore. This really corroborates the fact that the practice of synthesizing various musical styles within Georgia first originated during the Soviet period. Still, this process has naturally never been defined as fusion – or literally translated as a merging, "a blend of two styles (Lexico, XX)". Here I must mention that there were occurrences of folk music being used before the Soviet Estrada within the realm of professional music. Still, I will not discuss any similar cases while studying folk-fusion as a musical trend that had wound up inside the stylistic bounds of popular music.

Georgian folk-fusion represents a sort of "umbrella" term, and many sub-directions are joined within it (ethno-jazz, folk-rock, folk-alternative, folktronica). Still, folk-fusion was originally manifested as a type of ethno-jazz sub-direction within Georgian music.

The first attempts at a synthesis of Georgian folklore and jazz were manifested in the first jazz quartet

founded in 1954 under the direction of Guram Bzvaneli at the Polytechnic Institute, which was quite pivotal in this direction (*the GPI Quartet*). Later, this music direction further developed and numerous Estrada groups or projects joined in (*Otera, Dielo*, etc.). Still, from the standpoint of the most clearly defined characteristic of ethno-jazz, and even the ethno-jazz label, the first and most important group created in 1991 was *Adio*. Their album *Shin* (1995) represents kind of a musical ideal for enthusiasts of Georgian ethno-jazz (Sukhitashvili, 2020). The compositions included in this album are constructed on various techniques of fusing traditional Georgian music elements and jazz (Video Ex. 1).

Chronologically, the next sub-direction of Georgian folk-fusion is a synthetic form of Georgian folklore and rock (called folk-rock by the Georgians) appearing within the context of Soviet music. First, the coexistence of two forms of rock and popular music in the Soviet Union must be mentioned. The first ones were philharmonic vocal instrumental ensembles (to which *Ensemble 75* belonged), the second one, however, was the underground rock culture, those rock ensembles and performers not officially recognized or supported due to the radical quality of their own music and a distinctly Western style (Tsitishvili, 2005: 505–512). Most of these groups did not compose any original music, instead, they performed the repertoire of Western rock musicians, although there were some exceptions. Particularly the guitarists Kako Vashalomidze and Bachi Kitiashvili (*Bermukha's* soloist), who not only wrote their own compositions, but also actively made use of traditional Georgian music starting in the 1970s and presented it within a synthesis with Western rock elements. Included in their repertoire were compositions bearing titles of original folk sources (Kako Vashalomidze's *Mtskemsuri*, *Kalakuri*, *Tushuri* (Video Ex. 2), *Didavoi Nana*, *Artsivi* by *Bermukha* (Video Ex. 3)), which aimed for an organic merging of Georgian folklore intonations in improvisational rock guitar parts.

It can be said that one more sub-direction is the outcome of the early development of Georgian folk-fusion, a folk-alternative. This sub-direction initially appeared at the end of the 1980s when youth embracing keenly Western ideologies hiding out in the underground culture began to publicly make a show of their own position and rebellious disposition. First of all, with their own bold choice of clothing, and their lifestyle in general, which was demonstrated with exceptional intensity in their creative output. During this period, youth embracing a Western position, a “cosmopolitan” identity wound up having overlapping interests with a group full of national fervor, despite differences in values – at the end of the 1980s, Georgian society in its entirety united around the idea of Georgia gaining independence. As a result of these societal changes, political changes were not far behind and in 1991, the independence lost for 70 years was restored by the Georgian state.

Following the restoration of independence, the country's sociocultural condition radically changed. On one hand, Georgian culture, and society in general, were emancipated from the grips of Soviet censorship, although on the other hand, as supposed by the well-known Georgian philosopher Merab Mamardashvili (Chortolani, 2016: XX), society turned out to be unprepared for the newfound independence – neither economically nor mentally. Adaptation to the new economic challenges of a country locked into the unified Soviet system for many years took a lot of time. Added to this were political conflict and the confrontations of a society split into two camps spilling over into civil war (1991–1993). The internal turmoil was followed by a war with separatist groups led ideologically by Russia, resulting

in the occupation of the historic territories of Abkhazia and Samachablo (1991–1993). The greatest loss, especially for small countries like Georgia, was the many thousands of young people perished in these battles who were supposed to have led the future of independent Georgia. Therefore, countless families left without any men had to face the extreme socioeconomic situation extant in the country alone.

It is intriguing that this crisis period for the country comes across as a time when Georgian alternative music blossomed. The lifestyles and forms of self-expression of the youth pursuing this music somewhat resembled an escape from the current severe socioeconomic conditions to an idealistic illusion. At the same time, this was an openly expressed protest towards the extant reality. The new, radical wing emerging from the national movement, which from a certain standpoint, had replaced the ideological pressure of communism, viewed this rebellious attitude and forms of expression of the youth to be quite problematic within the conditions of this wave of nationalism. “If before, when opposing the values forced upon them by the system, society had marked sympathy for rebellious artists, any clash with the new “national” ideology caused the latter group to be completely marginalized. This occurred most of all to rock musicians of the new generation. Even their outward appearance was perceived as provocative and elicited great irritation among the pseudo-nationalist masses (Khaduri, 2015: XX)”. In the opinion of Artiom Troitsky, one of the stars and critics of Georgian alternative music in the 1990s, a Georgian musician most familiar with Georgian rock from an ethnic understanding (Tsotskhalashvili, 2015: 49), Lado Burduli recalls: “The society around me was so radical and aggressively disposed that writing and playing a song meant fighting with the entire system and ideology, beginning with parents and ending with airport customs inspectors (Machavariani, 2012)”.

Either way, adherents of music with Western origins, those with a provocative appearance made use of not only the Georgian language, but also sometimes some elements of Georgian folklore music to create a local color. This is especially interesting if we consider that Georgian folk music represented a kind of musical leitmotif of the national independence movement of that period. Thus, despite a conflict of interests, Georgian folklore continued its own path of development in both branches of society through various forms and connotations.

The prominent figures and artist-activists of Georgian alternative music at that time were Dada Dadiani and Irakli Charkviani, who “always tried to create original, and the main thing, pertinent Georgian music in light of form and content (Khaduri, 2015: XX)”. Some stars of alternative music spread across well-known Georgian groups at that time (Sergi Gvarjaladze, Bibi Kvachadze, and Gogi Chilashvili) were brought together into a final project *Georgian Dance Empire* by Dada Dadiani before he moved to Britain in 1993. The group members’ spheres of diverse interests harmoniously merged with each other in the project – Georgian folklore, American hip-hop, British rock, and electronic music. To this day, several compositions recorded by them are recognized as some of the best works of Georgian alternative music (Video Ex. 4). Attesting this is the fact that exactly 30 years later in 2023, these *Georgian Dance Empire* recordings were released as the fourth collection of Georgian alternative music through the *Georgian Musical Heritage* vinyl series. Group member Bibi Kvachadze notes at the vinyl presentation: “This release, it may be said, was one of my dreams come true. It’s quite a surrealistic picture – imagine it’s the year 1993, there is darkness in Georgia, and people are running around with automatic weapons. At this time 4 wackos are shut inside

a studio and recording some music. This was simultaneously entertainment and a search for oneself. If you listen to the text, you'll see that there are many heartaches. One of them is the song *Georgian Wrestling* containing such lyrics, "Hospitality is all I have left", because the country is destroyed. This music is part of history, a part of us, too, and that's why I think it has value (Billboard Georgia, 2023)".

Irakli Charkviani's first solo album *Swan Song* is connected to this crisis period of the 1990s, which is hailed as one of the best albums of Georgian alternative music of all time. Later, under the pseudonym "Mepe", the famous musician openly gives a voice to his own protest of the reality extant within the country in the song *Sakartvelo* (name of Georgia in the Georgian language) (1999). The song's basic idea is expressed best of all by elements of traditional Georgian music. In particular, the imitation of a *doli*, a Georgian folklore percussion instrument, creates quite a triumphant atmosphere to sound out the final phrase "Chven movigebt oms" ("We'll win the war"). Moreover, a citation of the Georgian urban song "Patara gogo damekarga" ("I've lost a young girl") symbolizes the homeland (Georgia) that had been lost in the sociopolitical chaos of the 1990s (Video Ex. 5).

Georgian Folk-fusion Today – Characteristics of Its Development

Process from the Perspective of Performer Motivation and Identity

Popular music forms have become even more global and universal through the technological changes ushered in by the 21st century and the massive spread of music through digital files in parallel with the existence of original, traditional musical cultures. New musical forms were created through a synthesis of popular and traditional music in Georgia, like in many other countries, with most being perceived as sub-directions of folk-fusion. As a result, the stylistic diversity of Georgian folk-fusion grew, and its modern stage has become much more multifaceted.

Therefore, today, experimental projects pursuing various modern musical trends coexist alongside ethno-jazz, one of the most traditional fusion forms of Georgian folklore with popular music. It can be said that the ethno-jazz group *Iriao*, which can be considered a continuation of the creative course pioneered by the first Georgian ethno-jazz band *Adio* created in the 1990s, stands at the epicenter of this stylistically diverse spectrum of Georgian folk-fusion. This is not surprising at all if we consider that the well-known Georgian composer Davit Malazonia, the artistic director of *Iriao*, was the co-founder and lead musician of *Adio* in its own time. The creative streak initiated by him in *Adio* was sort of continued by him with *Iriao*, although in a completely new format with new performers and musical initiatives. The predominance of the vocal trio alongside the band's virtuoso instrumentalists (in electronic, as well as folk instrument performance) already attests to the leading role of traditional Georgian polyphony in *Iriao's* music. First of all, the compositions' dominant themes are sounded out within structures of three-voice polyphony, and only then are they worked into other instrument parts. Even more, the improvisational sections of the ethno-jazz band's vocal trio usually present multipart improvisation, creating a synthesis of jazz improvisation tradition and the improvisational practices within traditional Georgian polyphonic music in the compositions (Video Ex. 6). In contrast to other ethno-jazz projects, the vocal trio members of *Iriao*, experienced folk performers Buba Murghulia, Misho Javakhishvili, and Gaga Abashidze actually partook in the improvisational phenomenon in folk music before their encounter

with jazz, and from this point on they introduced these elements into their own performance styles and repertoire within the context of the ethno-jazz group. “We are followed by an approach from folk singing that you can create a certain improvisational line within some space and go along with this flow using your own line, your own vision. This is probably the most fascinating thing that has tagged along with us vocalists of *Iriao* from Georgian folk singing (Murghulia, 2019)”.

Davit Malazonia’s motive for music composition and performance mixed with elements of Georgian folk music over the last 30 years is intriguing. All this is connected to a natural, subconscious desire by the musician himself. While still studying for a music composition degree at Tbilisi State Conservatoire he considered improvisation within the bounds of traditional Georgian music and the creation of his own compositions based on this music to be the most natural things. He was brought to this musical symbiosis – a logical form of a modern Georgian musician’s self-expression bearing national values – through a love for the *Beatles* and jazz, which was implemented in the repertoire of the 1990s ethno-jazz group *Adio* and is today included in *Iriao*’s creative output. However, it seems, that his motivation for using elements of Georgian folklore in his own music compositions, along with feeling his own roots, was conditioned by yet another factor – the need to compose individual, original music. The best means of achieving the latter again deemed by him to be the incorporation of Georgian folk music: “These are really our roots down inside and you feel this, you have an internal sense of this – something genuine, true – and how can you just make some secondhand product through imitation, by copying some American jazzman or someone else?! This is the shortest route by which your individuality can surface. And this is the main thing in music (Malazonia, 2019)”.

Like *Iriao*’s group members, the ages, biographies, cultural influences, and musical priorities of the modern Georgian folk-fusion performers are also quite different from each other. Therefore, their own motivations for using folklore sources are also disparate. When talking with musicians active in folk-fusion or those having once been involved in experimental projects, it was shown that the usage of elements of Georgian musical folklore in their own compositions was stipulated by various types of internal or external motives (frequently a combination of both). Some of them are a desire for self-expression, national values, the exoticism of this music, commercial potential, etc.

It is intriguing that an analysis of the motivations and identities of musicians performing Georgian folk-fusion yields quite a different picture in the case of emigrant musicians. The relationship to Georgian traditional music in their own creative work is stipulated by bringing together seemingly mutually opposing categories – traditional and modern, and also native and acquired – and through this, by a motivation to turn their split identity into a single whole. To demonstrate this, I will discuss the creative work of Ilusha Tsinadze, a Georgian musician active in the USA, by considering the use of native folk music within his work. Even more so since due to its stylistic or conceptional openness, we can place Ilusha’s music at the cusp of the Georgian folk-fusion category.

“I was in the Italian part of the Alps and I just got this feeling that I have to go back to Georgia. Being in the mountains reminded me of that (Tsinadze, 2018)”. This is how Ilusha Tsinadze began to rediscover his own roots. Upon graduating from the jazz program at William Patterson University, New Jersey, in 2004, the musician traveled to Georgia for the first time since 1991 when his family had moved to the

USA. Despite not having planned this when traveling to Georgia, Ilusha Tsinadze's relationship with Georgian music began upon his arrival and today he is already the composer of two albums infused with elements of traditional Georgian music.

Ilusha Tsinadze's own approaches to performing Georgian folk music are wholly shaped by his American musical experience and genetic connection to Georgia, which lastly puts him in circumstances different from those of other Georgian musicians. Accordingly, it is difficult to discuss Tsinadze's creative work when reviving traditional Georgian music within any manifested or local Georgian musical directions (whether this be stage folklore, pop-folk, or folk-fusion).

Ilusha's musical self-identification is declared on his website where his music is presented as a life having one foot in New York and the other in a small country (Georgia on the Black Sea is implied) (Tsinadze, 2018). But if it is still necessary to assign his own music to a specific style (in response to my question), he still prefers to call himself a folk musician: "Essentially, I'm playing traditional music but I'm finding my own voice. I would love to be called a folk musician in Georgia as well, that would be perfect because I play folk music. But it's just a more contemporary version of it (Tsinadze, 2018)". It is clear from this standpoint that Ilusha's musical style is foremost a reflection of his own perception of folk music, which is already different from the Georgian approach and is wholly based on an American practice where the issue of some musical material's originality, its so-called authenticity is no longer the main thing for performers.

Clearly, the emigrant musician's position is stipulated by the American social and cultural context where he grew up and matured as a person and musician. The sociocultural context, however, is one of the defining factors in determining various types of individual identities. Baumeister and Muraven declare individual identity is an adaptation of a social context. "History, culture, and the proximate structure of social relations create a context in which the individual identity must exist (Baumeister, Muraven, 1996: 405)". Ilusha Tsinadze's personal history connects his identity to Georgia, whereas the structure of the sociocultural relationships he is accustomed to originate from the US. Therefore, Ilusha's individual originality and musical identity represent a mixture of his Georgian and American identities and create an original symbiosis of their cultural specificity: "The American dream is to be different and to find your own self to be original, so people have a lot of room to be creative and original. In Georgia, it's a little harder for people to be their own thing, because there is much more cultural pressure. In fact, American culture rewards you for being unique whereas Georgian culture kind of punishes you somehow. I've known that for most of my adult life, I was always trying to be original and I can't lose that, so when I'm playing Georgian music it's kind of finding myself there (Tsinadze, 2018)".

As we see, the desire to achieve originality and be different when performing Georgian music are some of the powerful motivations behind Ilusha Tsinadze's use of Georgian folk music. Of course, this is a path different from other musicians, and from this aspect, is a means of being competitive in the music world. We can deduce that two types of motivation, internal, as well as external, are merged in the emigrant musician's creative aspirations and the convergence of these two types spurs him on to progress and develop as a musician.

Over the last few years, in the wake of the process of rediscovering his roots and gaining a better

knowledge of Georgian folklore, Ilusha Tsinadze's music continues to develop and therefore, his creative approach also changes somewhat. These changes are clearly reflected in his second album released in 2019 – *Yes and No*. Compositions included on the album are primarily based on Georgian vocal polyphony, which can be interpreted as logical outcomes of Ilusha becoming better aware of Georgian folklore and understanding the uniqueness of traditional polyphony (Video Ex. 7). “Somehow the longer I'd been playing the songs the less I felt I needed to do to them, they become purer”. (Tsinadze, 2018)”. Thus, the album titled *Yes and No* can be understood as kind of a result of Ilusha Tsinadze's personal development and his becoming better aware of his two-layered identity. In the album's foreword, the musician himself remarks, that the title of the album “captures the idea of my music being both traditional and not, as well as my identity being both Georgian and not (Tsinadze, 2019)”. The entirety embodied in Ilusha Tsinadze's individual and distinct personality is formulated through a synthesis of these two identities. This is expressed best of all in his music.

Conclusion

It was shown through the study discussed in the article that Georgian folk music elements being used by Georgian folk-fusion musicians in their own compositions have to do with their internal, as well as external motivations. It turned out that the musicians with different artistic thoughts and motivations presented in the study, apart from the individual aspect, have also been transformed in other ways, yet they are still guided by a motivation to express respect for national values. It seems Georgian traditional music is so inseparable from its national aspect in the concepts of Georgian musicians of a different generation or mentality that the perception of traditional Georgian music (or even of its individual elements) is much greater than just being interesting, or even exotic musical material. Moreover, despite different creative priorities or forms of using folklore, a large portion of modern folk-fusion musicians are brought together by the coexistence of a cosmopolitan identity alongside a national one. In Loren Ninoshvili's opinion, in this aspect, they are “within an ideological space that is oriented westward, and perhaps feel a certain compulsion to conform to “imported ideas” of cosmopolitan global identity (Ninoshvili, 2009: 413)”. All this, however, is significantly conditioned by the musicians' past experiences and their living environment, with its cultural and social accents.

Unfortunately, the picture of Georgian folk-fusion is still scarce, and it is characterized by fragmented manifestations. Some of the projects carried out are documented and have not been uploaded on the internet (thus it represents quite a challenging sphere to access for research). Perhaps on one hand, the complexity and refinement of traditional Georgian polyphony, and on the other, the deferential attitude towards it, might be some of the reasons for the caution of the Georgian musicians who're using traditional musical culture to find new forms today. On the one hand, they are modern people attempting to adequately express themselves as representatives of the 21st century. On the other hand, however, they sense that they, as Georgians, are intimately connected to old cultural traditions, therefore they want to use this rich and original traditional musical culture to express their own modern views and find new ones. In summation, however, these musicians imbued with various motivations somewhat come across as cultural agents consciously or unconsciously imparting a modern sound to an ancient culture.

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Please see the QR code for video examples



**FUSION TRENDS OF TRADITIONAL GEORGIAN POLYPHONY
AND MODERN MUSIC FROM THE STANDPOINT OF A
GEORGIAN ETHNOMUSICOLOGIST LIVING ABROAD**

Introduction

Whoever has listened to Georgian polyphony and is knowledgeable of its diversity and richness will agree with me that traditional Georgian polyphony does not require any fusion with modern¹ music to be refined and enriched. The Georgian polyphonic song language is extremely developed and aesthetically astoundingly refined. It also possesses originality, and it is easy to diminish this originality by treating it incorrectly. Despite this, this process is inevitable and was conceived quite a while ago. The mutual influence and assimilation of cultures is an ancient process. Even in prehistoric times, foreign tribes and ethnic elements would make incursions on Georgian territory. Signs of a synthesis of their material and sacred culture have been corroborated many times in archeological studies (Mirtskhulava and Chikovani, 2014; Batiuk and Rothman, 2007). Music would be one of the important components of this process.² Processes of the recent past are much better substantiated. For example, in the 19th century, during a period of a rise in national movements all over Europe, Georgian composers began to develop an interest in Georgian polyphony and use its rules in their own composed works. Naturally, they carried out a fusion of European classical and Romantic music and Georgian polyphony.

In the present work, I will focus on the synthesis process of popular styles and genres of Georgian folk polyphony and modern music in the 20th and 21st centuries.³ Today, the world music industry is full of hybrid genres.⁴ Georgian (and non-Georgian) musicians have something unique and of high artistic value in the form of Georgian polyphony. The synthesis of Georgian polyphony with modernity yields various forms. In general, we can single out two stylistic genres: 1. Classical music (art music) and 2. Popular music: jazz, pop, and rock. I will be talking about the second genre. This style indeed belongs to the fusion category,⁵ but in my opinion, it would be more accurate to call synthetic outcomes of Georgian polyphonic and modern popular music “folk-jazz”, or “folk-pop/ethno-pop”. In this case, I will clarify what styles are being synthesized.

One of the important theses of the present article posits that a synthesis of local musical traditions with foreign and comparatively modern music styles begins as a result of the disintegration of prein-

¹ The usage of the word “modernity” is frequently incorrect. Traditional Georgian music is as modern as jazz, Western pop, and rock. It is more expedient to use the term “foreign” because we are talking about the synthesis of traditional Georgian polyphony with the music of other cultures. Everything heard now is modern.

² Regarding this, see Tsitsishvili, 2010.

³ Concerning this fusion in more detail, see, Lomsadze 2022.

⁴ See Stokes, Martin, 2004.

⁵ For more details about fusion, see Feldman, 2022.

dustrial, traditionally stable societies. The processes of cultural intersections and mutual influence have indeed taken place since time immemorial, yet in an epoch of facilitated communications, such cultural exchanges have reached a previously unseen level. The 19th century was such a crucial moment in world history. The development of capitalism and industrial construction began, and an increase in urban populations at the cost of tearing apart the small and bound societies of villages. Today we can use African music and mix it with Hindi music without ever having been in India or Africa. Therefore, we can make a second thesis here: the synthesis process is connected to the development of professional music making. If the unbroken heritage of many generations in the village ensured the continuity of music's oral folklore tradition, professional and individual creative work acquires more room to move within the conditions of urbanization. Modern-day Georgian ensembles, such as Basiani, for example, is actually directed and led by such professional and experienced musician, and not by singers living in a village, whose primary activity is not making music. CDs, international performances, and masterclass tours are inseparable parts of this. There are many songs performed by such urban ensembles today that are no longer performed in the traditional environment of the village. The traditional environment for these songs is now these professional ensembles. Let's recall also, that Zakaria Paliashvili, Andria Balanchivadze, Aleks Machavariani, Sulokhan Tsintsadze, and many other famous Georgian composers who used Georgian folk music had not even been raised within an authentic environment of traditional folk polyphony.

An Individual Perspective

In the present work, I will share my personal experience and observations as a practitioner and researcher of the synthesis of Georgian polyphonic and modern popular music with the reader. Several creative and social factors aiding this process in general, and specifically my own experience, will be discussed in the article. I have lived in the city of Melbourne, Australia since 1995, where, it can be said, there are no Georgian immigrant communities. Over this time, I introduced and taught many Australians polyphonic Georgian folk singing. As a result, many admirers and performers of Georgian polyphony appeared in Australia. Many choirs have been formed under my and Joseph Jordania's direction, which performed Western popular, as well as Georgian folk songs, naturally creating an advantageous environment for synthesis. Sometimes it became necessary to show choir members points where foreign Georgian polyphony and the English-language pop music familiar to them interacted with each other, giving us the means of bringing these two cultures closer together and demonstrating more commonalities between them.

In the article, I will touch upon the use of some principles of traditional Georgian polyphony in arranging pop music hits while working with Melbourne choirs, what my motives were, what I selected for synthesis within the Australian lifestyle, and what results we obtained. Are these results a true synthesis? Or is this only a superficial fusion? What are their artistic/aesthetic and sociopsychological values and effects? In the article, I will discuss in comparative detail the arrangement of one popular Western pop song using the principles of Georgian polyphony – “Wannabe” by the Spice Girls.

Working with choirs, conducting many masterclasses, and debuting at countless festivals in the years 1996–2019 in Australia, the US, England, Canada, and France personally spurred me on to search for

new stylistic ideas. There were various reasons. First, this was a creative stimulus to look for new ideas. The second thing probably is there was a demand for this among choir members and listeners. For example, a competition was held at one festival for the best arrangement of the English metal rock band Led Zeppelin's song "Stairway to Heaven". Our trio, called Golden Fleece, debuted a three-voice variant of this song using the principles of Georgian polyphony and chord structure.

Even earlier, while living in Melbourne in 1997, I began the process of arranging the Laz/Acharan song "Nardanina". I decided to render a monodic, romantic melody found by Peter Gold in Turkey into three voices. While it's true that this three-voice texture and style are constructed upon the principles of Georgian chord structure and functionalism (chord progressions), there is a synthesis of various Georgian dialectic polyphonic features within it. The original versions of "Nardanina" are not found in this form. For example, in measures 1–8, I used ostinato in the top voice and made the lower two voices move. The bass movement I–VII–IV–V–VI–VII–I is generally characteristic of Gurian chord progressions. However, the song's original melody is heard in the middle voice. We obtain a new colorization in summation.

Nardanina

Arr. Nino Tsitsishvili

Soprano

nar - da ni - na na - i - na, nar - da - ni - na na - i - na.

Bass

S

Nar - da - ni - na na - i - na, nar - da - ni - na na - i - na. Nar - da - ni - na na - i - na

B

S

nar - da - ni - na na - i - na

B

S

Ghe - les mo - akvs na - fo - ti, al - vis chu - mo - na - ta - li.

B

(2)da - dek ge - le mi - txa - ri, A - lis sha - mo - na - tva - li. Na - rda - ni - na...

The positive feminist group, the Spice Girls, who came on the scene during the 1990s, is probably well known by all those into pop music. Some radically different positions are expressed regarding the social status and state of women in society in “Nardanina” and in one of the most famous songs by the Spice Girls, “Wannabe”. The freedom of English girls of the 1990s beyond the dominion of men is in contrast to the Laz girl’s deferential position and dialogue with a boy in love with her, who says that she is growing up for him. Motivated by these differences, some rhythms and harmonies popped into my head in which the tunes of the Laz “Nardanina” and English “Wannabe” were combined.

A

Oooh _____ with "a" third and fourth times _____

5 B

Bom bom bom bom bom bom bom bom Bom bom bom bom bom bom bo bom bom

9 C

Bom bonbom bom bom bombobom Bom bonbom bom bom bombo bom bom

Excerpts from Nino Tsitsishvili’s arrangement “Nardanina” and “Wannabe”.

Synthesis and Fusion as Two Ways for Intercultural Relationships

What musical and social processes are we dealing with during such a synthesis? What historical interpretation can be given to these processes? In my opinion, it is necessary to consider the idea of the existence of two different types of intercultural musical relationships in an analysis of this process, formulated by me in one of my previous works: these two types are synthesis and fusion. Here’s what I mean. Achieving a synthesis between musical styles is quite an extensive, natural, and subconscious process, whereas fusion is a comparatively more superficial and clearly intentional process. I am not trying to determine which one is bad or good. Both are realistically occurring processes.

Fusion is sometimes defined as a new stage for musicians, the creation of new record labels and new events where musicians meet and mutually exchange ideas, attracting listeners with novel ideas and styles (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z3dqhyc/articles/zr4fscw>).

In the beginning, the term “fusion” described the collaboration of jazz improvisation and complex rock, but some elements of ethno-music gradually began to poke their way into jazz as well. The famous saxophonist John Coltrane is considered a pioneer of fusion.

Audio Example 1: “My Favorite Things” from the movie “The Sound of Music”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8d9cD_Es9k4&ab_channel=HassanKhan

It is difficult to not notice the utmost level of music making and depth of understanding of musical themes through which a fusion of the stylistic features of Indian classical music and jazz is achieved. Despite this, it is still clear that both musical styles retain their own autonomy. Indian and Western American jazz can easily be distinguished by the listener. Therefore, despite the great musical mastery, we are still dealing with fusion here and not synthesis.

Ethno-jazz acquired an independent status as the result of the commercial success of ethnic music within the conditions of globalization beginning in the 1990s. The accent was transferred to a Western interpretation of non-Western, ethnic, and traditional music (https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Ethno_jazz). A remarkable example of the new Georgian ethno-jazz is the ensemble, The Shin. A vocal-instrumental work titled “Mr. Kansav Kipiane’s Waltz”, is one of the most skillful and tasteful interpretations of a Georgian folk song within a jazz context. The Shin uses the melodic/harmonic formula of the traditional Svan polyphonic song “Kansav Kipiane”, although apart from the Svan, the musical stylistic principles of other Georgian music dialects are also used. The vocal style is associated with scat jazz, and simultaneously with Western Georgian shrill singing. The improvisational principle also draws Western jazz and Georgian folklore closer together in this work. Despite this, as is appropriate to fusion, both styles, jazz, and Georgian folklore, retain their own independent existence and some essentially new style in which the features of two cultures would be imperceptible is not created by their fusion.

Audio example 2: “Kansav Kipiane”, traditional Svan song

(http://www.alazani.ge/base/georgika/Georgika_-_Yansav_Yipiane.mp3).

Audio example 3: “Mr. Kansav Kipiane’s Waltz”, The Shin

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1BLYhccpbs&ab_channel=TheShin).

We can deduce that to this day the musical languages of Georgian polyphony and Western (or Eastern/Arabic/Indian) origin have been unable to achieve a harmonic coexistence with each other, possibly in any genre which would yield a true and organic synthesis, in the past or present.

As for synthesis, a deeper form of fusion might be obtained through a meeting of cultures at historically important moments, which I call “synthesis”. In order for the synthesis of two or several musical styles to be implemented, musical skill and a talent for experimentation are just not enough. An important cultural-historical background and developments making such a process of musical synthesis inevitable and organic are required too. Synthesis is not dependent on musicians’ purposeful experimentation. Historical and cultural backdrops, unfortunately, frequently negative processes are necessary, for example, wars of conquest, the oppression and assimilation of people, resettlement of large segments of the population, and slavery. Examples of such a process and a musical-cultural synthesis originating right inside it, in my opinion, are the early forms of jazz that appeared in America beginning in the 18th century to the start of the 20th century.

Audio example 4: “No More, My Lord”, religious hymn, prison blues, work song, recorded by Alan Lomax

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQ7j4K45Dl8>).

If you listen to this work, the open, unstable vocalizations, lilting voices, melismas, pauses, and wide intervals reach into your heart. The blues mode, which is of African origin, is already combined with the functional harmony of European origins, with the typical chord progressions characteristic of it. Despite the existence of these various elements, this song is no longer African, nor is it European. We could not pick out any specific melody or harmonic progression of African or European origin as we could in the earlier cited example by The Shin.

An example of synthesis from an even older historical period is the Kartl-Kakhetian table song style, to the origins of which I devoted a special article (Tsitsishvili, 2010).

Audio example 5: “Berikatsi var”

(<https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=XNNa7Q3F63Q&list=RDAMVMXNNa7Q3F63Q>).

This is synthesis and not fusion precisely because this is an independent style, while listening to it we get an association of only a polyphonic Georgian song, and we do not notice any elements of other ancient cultures possibly being assimilated in this style. Really, to an untrained eye and without any interdisciplinary academic analysis, it is impossible to see any cultural mix here. Table songs are characterized by long, drawn-out drones not found in the typical polyphonic styles of Western Georgia. The drawn-out drones might be associated with a melodic and rhythmic type: a free, unmetered rhythm and an ornamental, melismatic melody. Such melodics, of course, result in drone polyphony rather than in the polyphonic forms represented in some of the ritual and work song genres of Western and Eastern Georgia: contrastive polyphony, ostinato polyphony, polyphony constructed on a recitative (rhythmic) drone, and complex chordal polyphony. Here, some features of tetrachordal modes are also found. It must be noted that a melodic type with tetrachordal modes, melismatics, and unmetered, free rhythm characteristic of the Near East and Arabic world is mixed into Kartl-Kakhetian table songs. These foreign musical elements underwent assimilation through the influence of autochthonic polyphonic traditions, thereby probably causing the formation of such a unique style as long Kartl-Kakhetian table songs. Ancient, ethno-genetic processes taking place in Eastern Transcaucasia and Eastern Georgian territories 5,000–6,000 years ago when along with the influx of the Kura-Araxes and Trialeti Kurgan cultures, Indo-European and other foreign ethnic populations entered these territories, proof of this assimilation (Gavashelishvili et al. 2021; Batiuk and Rothman 2007; Alizadeh, Maziar, and Mohammadi 2018; Lortkipanidze 1989: 37–38; Japaridze 1988: 26; Burney 1958: 175).

In my article referenced earlier, I expressed an idea in consideration of archeological and historical data that this style of Eastern Georgian singing must have been the result of a synthesis of Eastern (Asian) and autochthonic cultures following the incursion of Indo-European tribes 5–6 thousand years ago on Eastern Georgian territory. This is an example of synthesis so organic that any features of other cultures have been fundamentally altered and it is impossible to notice them apart from academic research.

In summation, I will note that today we are witnessing a synthesis of polyphonic Georgian folk music with foreign music. This is fusion. Some of them are works of utmost professionalism, such as some of

the pieces by The Shin and some comparatively more easily accessible works of ethno-pop. I must point out that not one of them yet provides us with any examples of a thorough synthesis. Despite this, fusion still enjoys a certain popularity in certain circles, especially now when the cutting out of our polyphonic traditions from a village context and their instillation in the repertoires of professional ensembles have been caused by an unseen level of urbanization and globalization. Despite various styles in fusion not yielding any deep synthesis or forming into essentially new styles for the time being, this is somewhat of a process of altering traditions, transformation, and adaptation to modernity.

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CHAPTER 7

GEORGIAN POLYPHONY AS A CULTURAL TOURISM PRODUCT

TO THE VILLAGE IN SEARCH OF A SONG: POLYPHONY AND TOURISM

In this chapter, I trace the utilization and development of Georgian polyphony in tourism, particularly examining its role as an economic resource and as a site for encounter between individuals with widely differing backgrounds. As a small country that was locked behind the Iron Curtain for decades, Georgia still remains relatively unknown on the world stage, although tourism has become a major growth industry in the last two decades, providing 8.5 billion GEL to the national economy in 2019 (Georgian National Tourism Administration 2019).

Polyphonic singing is one of Georgia's cultural billboards – a point of cultural distinction that sets the country apart from others (Kipp 2016). Unique cultural elements become understood as resources once they are designated as “heritage” (Bendix 2018: 159); these resources then become available for economic development, allowing entrepreneurial individuals the means to improve their own financial situation, or that of their families or villages. While only a small number of tourists visit Georgia specifically to experience Georgian folk music, usually by joining small-scale “song study tours”, these people often develop a long-term interest in the country. They may visit it multiple times – even yearly, establish personal relationships with many Georgians, contribute to local charitable or developmental causes, and spend time and money in rural regions that are relatively underdeveloped compared to other parts of Georgia. Simultaneously, tour operators, hospitality providers, and singers receive payment while becoming acquainted with foreign worldviews and ways of life, sometimes even establishing contacts that lead to international performing and teaching tours.

Tourism in Georgia

Georgia's natural beauty, history, cuisine, and flamboyant cultural customs have strong touristic potential, and its government has made tourism development an official strategy for nearly two decades. While only 560,000 foreigners crossed Georgia's border in 2005 – a number including transit passengers and single-day visitors – the number of foreigners who stayed in Georgia for at least one night expanded to 1,800,000 in 2011 and 5,080,000 by 2019. The Georgian National Tourism Administration classifies as a “tourist” any foreigner who stays in Georgia overnight, including those who are vacationing, visiting relations, or conducting business. (The COVID pandemic greatly reduced tourism, with just over one million overnight guests in 2020, although that number rebounded to three million in the first ten months of 2022 as this article was being written.)

Many formerly socialist countries continue to suffer from a “non-image” problem, where the knowledge of outsiders toward those countries remains “either non-existent or vague” (Smith and Puczko 2020: 110). In this regard, national stereotypes and emblems can be important marketing strategies. Georgia's association with food and wine has certainly been a marketing boon; in the cultural realm,

its polyphonic music does have an international reputation, but one that remains restricted to a niche audience of world music and folk music fans. For this reason, polyphonic music is unlikely to ever serve as a master marketing category in the national tourism strategy.

According to tourist surveys conducted yearly, less than 20% of overnight visitors who come to Georgia primarily for a vacation or leisure deliberately seek out Georgian culture, art, or history. Surely many who come to Georgia for beach holidays or wine tourism encounter Georgian music along the way – anyone who attends Art Gene or street festivals such as Tbilisoba may experience Georgian polyphony as part of the soundscape. Foreigners may hear professional musicians performing “city songs”, well-known folk classics like “Chela” or “Tsintskaro”, or folk-pop fusion tunes at tourist-oriented restaurants around Old Tbilisi. A similar mix can be found in bars and cafes in other popular tourist sites like Batumi or Mestia. Some tourists may even seek out ticketed performances by national ensembles like Rustavi, Erisioni, or the Sukhishvili dancers at major concert halls, attracted by the spectacle. And recorded folk music may be heard in cafes, marshrutkas, or shops. However, the 20% figure indicates that Georgian music is of significant interest only to a minority of tourists.

This chapter will focus primarily on that subset of tourists who are so enraptured by Georgian polyphony that they come to Georgia specifically to study it. Such travelers have often already invested significant time and energy learning about the country and its cultural traditions. This travel is a kind of pilgrimage, visiting a distant place which is nevertheless pre-charged with incredible personal significance and meaning. While they are a small percentage of the tourist population, the relatively small size of the Georgian folk music scene means that a large percentage of Georgian musicians have encountered song tourists or “song hunters” (Knight 2019). For some musicians, hosting and teaching foreign singers has become an important income stream. If musicians have begun to change their behaviour in response to foreign interest, this means that tourism has an effect on folk music-making in Georgia, and its role needs to be understood.

Alternative Tourism

Song tourists usually come from Western Europe – the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Belgium – and sometimes from farther-flung regions like North America or Australia. In many cases, they have no Georgian heritage, but develop an affinity through an encounter with Georgian music, which appeals due to its “mysterious sounds”: drones, close and mystical harmony, strong vocal production, intricate ornamentation, and primal or pastoral associations (Buchanan 2006: 361–69; Laušević 2007: 59–62). The unfamiliar and exotic sounds may automatically be considered to be spiritual (Frishkey 2012; Keister 2005), and listeners who research Georgian music in greater detail are often drawn to its connections to pre-Christian belief and paraliturgical ritual. Many song tourists are members of Georgian choirs or world music choirs in their home countries. Caroline Bithell’s chapter in this volume provides invaluable context on this subject, and song tourism cannot be fully understood without reading the two chapters together, particularly since many of the teachers who host foreigners in Georgia also lead performance and teaching tours abroad, where they may encounter workshop participants who are so affected by the experience that they wish to come to Georgia personally.

Song tourists engage in a form of tourism that differs from sightseeing-oriented mass-market tourism carried out in luxury hotels. Song tourism can be conceptualized as a form of alternative tourism, overlapping with agro-tourism (Engel et al. 2006), sustainable tourism, responsible tourism (Rajebashvili 2012), green tourism, community-based tourism (Bithell 2014b), or eco-tourism. Such approaches are meant to minimize negative environmental impacts, promote the positive development of local communities, and reduce poverty.

Eco-tourism and alternative tourism imply small-scale enterprises where tourists have extensive, direct contact with local residents, often through prolonged stays in a single community where they attempt to experience life as the locals know it. This form of tourism is meant to be consistent with community values and to allow hosts and guests to enjoy positive shared experiences (Stronza 2001). In this type of travel, “the living culture is the focus of the attraction. Tourists visit the living culture to intentionally interact with the community” (Swanson and DeVereaux 2017: 84). Alternative tourism allows visitors access to the “back stage” area of real life, not simply a stylized reenactment of folk customs (MacCannell 1999). Not having been raised on the sanatorium model of mass health and relaxation tourism common in East Europe during the socialist era (Gorsuch and Koenker 2006), Western European and North American tourists in particular often crave a more intimate form of local encounter. And it is precisely “higher spending” visitors from such countries that the Georgian government has hoped to attract (Rajebashvili 2012: 6).

Participatory music-based tourism can generally be viewed as a type of alternative tourism, because in most cases these tours are small-scale, engage directly with local hospitality providers, and do not funnel all their profits toward multinational hotel chains or foreign tour guides. It can be viewed as a subset of “edutourism”, which attracts people who want to learn some form of local knowledge that may include traditional handicrafts, culinary techniques, or artforms (Hasanah and Ruhimat 2019). Song tourism in Georgia is only one instance of participatory music tourism; for example, the website musicalgetaways.com advertises package trips to Spain, Cuba, and Brazil for a maximum of twelve travelers. These tours are led by musicians and musicologists, and include daily visits to music venues; however, they appear to include less direct learning of local customs, and they travel frequently to new locations, blurring the lines between mass tourism and alternative tourism somewhat. Other examples of participatory music tourism are readily available: drumming workshops in Ghana (Carter 2013) or gamelan classes in Bali (Clendinning 2016) are two of the most obvious.

Song Tourism in Georgia

A few foreigners with strong local connections began organizing the first study tours in the early 2000s on an annual or regular basis. For some time, these tours were generally initiated and planned by non-Georgians, who understood how to market the events and what kind of hospitality standards and activities the guests would expect. However, some Georgian musicians who have participated in such events as teachers or hosts now organize their own tours without a foreign intermediary, having established connections and credibility abroad.

Carl Linich, who travelled to Georgia in the 1990s to study polyphony as a member of the North

American Trio *Kavkasia* and later lived there for a decade, met numerous musicians, and made many contacts all across the country. Trio *Kavkasia*'s time in Georgia preceded song tourism as an organized activity; when they studied there for several months in 1995, the notion of foreigners visiting Georgia to learn its folk music seemed very strange to many Georgians (Gelzer 2022). Their experience differs in important respects from song tourism as it later developed – they spent several months in the country and had to improvise their course of study and find teachers without much precedent. However, they established paths that many other foreigners would follow – to Svaneti and Guria, among other places. Linich drew upon his contacts to help the American organization *Village Harmony* plan its pioneering song study tour in summer 2001, which brought participants from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany to Georgia for three weeks. *Village Harmony* has hosted singing camps in Georgia every year since then (except for the COVID-19 years); the organization also brings singers to locations including Corsica, Macedonia, and South Africa to learn local music, making it unique among music tour organizers in Georgia, which are in other cases not led by established professional organizations.

Edisher Garakanidze in the United Kingdom, Frank Kane in France, and Joseph Jordania in Australia had an important role in building interest in Georgian music abroad (Bithell 2014a; Jordania and Garakanidze 2015). (For more on these organizations and individuals, again see Caroline Bithell's chapter in this volume.) The students they taught in workshops often developed a desire to visit Georgia and learn music there themselves; while some organized travel and lessons independently, the song study tour model offered a more accessible entry point, given the challenges of linguistic translation and finding musical contacts.

These tours generally include between eight to twenty students, usually from Western Europe or North America (although on one occasion I was part of a group of nearly forty). Smaller, inexperienced groups may have an unsatisfying experience if there are not enough strong singers to manage the three-part texture of Georgian folk music. The guests may not know each other before the trip begins, though in some cases the entire membership (or a good portion) of a choir like London's *Maspindzeli* or Australia's *Melbourne Georgian Choir* will travel together. Singers who join these tours may vary in age, with a mixture of young people in their twenties and thirties, middle-aged travellers, and retired or elderly individuals. Tours last for an average of seven to fourteen days, entailing several hours of instruction per day, during which participants learn three-part songs orally. Shorter tours may be held in a single location, but it is not uncommon for groups to visit two or three separate teachers in different regions of the country.

Instruction often focuses on learning a regional repertory, like Svan or Acharan music, in its rural home context from local tradition-bearers. Some participants may seek out one-on-one instrumental instruction, but the primary focus of the group tours is on singing three-part vocal music—for this reason, I tend to refer to Georgian song tourism rather than Georgian music tourism. Round dance or solo dance may also be a component of instruction, but again dance is not usually the primary focus.

Tours generally include some sightseeing or hiking, geared to the comfort levels of participants. They may include attendance at local performances or festivals, or sometimes observation of and even participation in village rituals. In most cases, Georgian food and wine are an important element of the

singing tours, and nightly supras, often with guest village singers in attendance, offer the participants a chance to practice their new repertoire in a traditional setting. I have experienced tours where the hosts take a very active role initiating guests into the art of toasting and the rules of the supra; on other tours, the hosts may leave the guests largely to themselves in the evenings, but experienced foreigners will often take on the role of the tamada in these cases. Singers may also appreciate the opportunity to chant Georgian hymns in churches (although sometimes this has led to tension with local worshippers or priests, who do not always appreciate hymns being sung by non-Orthodox individuals). Village Harmony ends its song study camps with a short performance tour in Georgia that includes music from other countries, but most other camps do not include performance by participants as a major feature—rather, such performances may arise on an ad hoc basis. Tours I have participated in have included last-minute performances at a Zugdidi city festival, at a Svanetian primary school, and for a televised folk music program. Although foreigners singing Georgian music is no longer unheard of, it still seems to be unusual enough to arouse some local interest.

Circuits, Networks, and Commodities

Given that the market for song tourism is still a small one, some song tourists have visited the same songmasters and villages multiple times. In Signaghi, Ketevan Mindorashvili and members of the Zedashe Ensemble have developed a close relationship with Village Harmony and continue to host their touring groups each year. Revered regional songmasters such as Andro Simashvili in Kakheti, Tristan Sikharulidze and Vazha Gogoladze in Guria, Polikarpe Khubulava in Samegrelo, and Islam Pilpani in Svaneti hosted or taught many groups of foreigners over the years. At the time of writing, only Tristan Sikharulidze is still living, although Islam Pilpani's son Vakhtang has capitalized on his father's reputation and two decades teaching foreigners, turning the Pilpani home into a guesthouse that continues to host singing groups as well as backpackers and other tourists. For the last decade, many foreign groups have learned songs from members of the Chamgeliani family in Svaneti's Lakhushdi village (sometimes collaborating with Nana Mzhavanadze) or the Turmanidze family of Merisi village in upper Ach'ara. Nino Naneishvili orchestrates song study tours in Samegrelo and Rach'a, often working with members of her ensemble Ialoni. Beso Chitanava hosts singers at his "Folk House" in Zugdidi. Malkhaz Erkvanidze has hosted song tourists in his home village of Bukhistsikhe, sometimes with the help of members of Sakhioba ensemble; Tornike Skhiereli has brought singing groups to Rach'a, while Levan Bitarovi of ensemble Adilei leads multiple tours per year, working simultaneously as tour guide, driver, translator, and teacher. Zoe Perret, though not Georgian-born, has employed her extensive knowledge, experience, language skills, and local connections to lead tours for French-speaking groups.

While in a sense these hosts and teachers compete to attract the same students, they may also contribute to each other's success. Valeria Klitsounova identifies "tourism clusters" in rural areas, arguing that such networks are built upon existing informal networks and social unity—one resource that cash-poor regions may actually possess in abundance. In Georgia, these clusters could comprise numerous small-scale business operators, such as guesthouse owners, cooks and bakers, drivers, hiking and horse-riding guides, artists, producers of traditional handicrafts, experts in local rituals and customs, and performing arts

specialists and teachers. All of these aspects combine to create an immersive “experience value chain” (Klitsounova 2020: 166). To Klitsounova, the success of tourism in peripheral regions will depend on the strength of social ties between members of the cluster and their ability to work as a team (2020: 172).

Examples of these clusters abound in Georgian tourism—guesthouse owners often recommend or hire relatives to serve as drivers, and they will help guests buy musical instruments from local master craftsmen. Song teachers like Levan Bitarovi or Zoe Perret who lack their own guesthouse operations will frequently take groups to study with the Chamgelianis in Lakhushdi or the Turmanidzes in Merisi. Vakhtang Pilpani runs a 75-minute package performance with members of Riho ensemble that he performs for hotels in Mestia and Becho, although he is a guesthouse owner himself. John Graham, a musicologist and specialist in Georgian chant who also runs a tourism business (that is not song tourism, but frequently features live music), employs Vakhtang’s group on occasion, as well as bringing his guests to the Chamgeliani home in Lakhushdi. And host musicians may recommend teachers in other regions when their guests express an interest in learning other Georgian musical styles. Thus, tourism professionals who operate overlapping, complementary, or competing businesses collaborate in various ways with each other, which lessens the profit that each business could potentially get from a single group by monopolizing its time but strengthens the network and increases the likelihood that collaboration will continue, ultimately promising future profits.

At least some song students become devoted repeat guests, treasuring the personal friendships and familiarity with particular locations that they build. For example, more than a dozen members of the Melbourne Georgian Choir visited Islam Pilpani two, three, or even four times after making their first visit to Lenjeri in 2010. Flying from Australia to Georgia is an expensive and lengthy journey, suggesting that these travellers found something deeply valuable in the experience. Singers from Western Europe are able to travel to Georgia much more economically – flying with Wizz Air – costing them only one tenth of what a tourist from North America or Australia would pay. This allows some to visit the country regularly. Geoff Burton, who sings in the London choir Maspindzeli, has been to Georgia eighteen times since 1998. While less than half of these visits have included song study camps, most of them have involved music in some way or another—listening to concerts, attending ensemble rehearsals, or meeting musician friends and singing informally. His colleague in Maspindzeli, Susan Thompson, has made twenty-three trips to Georgia, with a similar musical focus.

Due to the transactional nature of the capitalistic tourist economy, we can conceptualize songs as commodities. Foreign singers pay to learn new songs that they can add to their repertoire; from a certain perspective, it might seem like repeat customers may eventually run out of new songs to learn and feel disappointed if a song study tour consists only of songs they already know. Many experienced foreign singers of Georgian music are fully capable of learning and transcribing unfamiliar songs simply by listening to recordings available on YouTube or alazani.ge, bringing into question whether such singers would ever need to return to Georgia again. However, a song learned during a song camp can be likened to a “value-added” consumer product. In this situation, the value is not simply in the raw material (the song) itself and the immediate purpose to which the user can put it; rather, the circumstances and experiences surrounding the transmission of the song are also considered valuable enough that users will pay far more than otherwise.

When singers later perform these songs, they will have greater personal meaning through the memories associated with the time when they were learned. A song like “Lazhghvash” becomes more than just “that Svan song with the chuniri”; it becomes “the song that I learned from Islam Pilpani two years before he died, and that we sang together with members of Riho at a supra in Islam’s house in Lenjeri, where we were surrounded by towering mountains, medieval stone towers, and subsistence farmers walking their cows to the pasture”. The world music market has been criticized for severing music “schizophonicly” from its point of origin, meaning that musical commodities in the form of recorded songs can travel far away to consumers who may have no knowledge of (or interest in) the original context of the music (Feld 1994). In song tourism, music fans seek to repair this rupture, taking the music back to its origin point and experiencing it personally. This represents a deepening fascination with the music, one that starts with consumption of musical commodities (recordings) through listening but extends into direct participation and an experience at the source.

In the words of Regina Bendix, “tourism ultimately sells narratable experience” (Bendix, 2018: 82). While song tourists doubtlessly value the process of “song collection”, in which they add new material to their repertoires – in other words, the exchange of song commodities – this is only part of the draw in returning to Georgia. What people are really paying for is an experience that differs from their everyday lives in ways that they consider valuable – an experience that they can return to in memory time and time again and share with friends and loved ones by recounting stories. In this way, a song learned more than once may simply add more details to the memories and stories associated with that song. Further, there is a place in tourism for repeated experience. A pleasurable familiarity can develop as a foreign city becomes comfortable, as certain events are anticipated upon a return visit. One of the chief pleasures expressed by song tourists relates to the quality of village life in Georgia – a concept metaphorically entangled with a host of related ideas.

The Lure of the Village and the Intercultural Encounter

The song tourism experience combines the “objective authenticity” of ancient songs taught by elderly tradition bearers who have passed them down over the centuries with the “existential authenticity” of transcendent, life-changing experience (Wang 1999). For some tourists, spending time in a Georgian village is an attraction itself. Ecologically and socially minded visitors appreciate the chance to learn about a different way of life, especially one that is rural and connected to land and community. Such visitors often draw contrasts between their own lives in highly rationalized industrial society, and what they see as the advantages of a “simpler” life, possibly influenced by nostalgia for a lost village that their distant ancestors may have lived in. This is not to say that song tourists think village life is perfect or preferable, but it can cause them to reflect on their values and elements they want more of. On one occasion, after a Georgian tamada toasted the countries of his guests, which he described as “strong” and “rich”, one responded by calling Georgia rich in friendship, relationship, and community, and Western countries primarily rich in material goods and consumerism.

On a musical level, while many lovers of Georgian song are initially drawn to the overpowering displays of virtuosity presented by ensembles like Rustavi or Basiani, many grow to appreciate or even

prefer the more intimate experience of informal village singing. This replicates the famous dichotomy between secondary and primary folklore identified by Edisher Garakanidze (2007). As Australian singer Lloyd O'Hanlon told me, "the real beauty and essence of it for me is family: singing families and village families and village choirs who are the modern incarnations, the reasons why this whole thing was kept alive, right? They're passing songs down orally and keeping something amazing going, preserving something even if each time the song gets slightly different or changes a semitone here or there".

In the small-scale tourism characteristic of song study tours, where foreigners are invited to live in family homes for days or even weeks, there tends to be a high level of interaction between hosts and guests. This can blur the line between customer and friend. In this way, tourism represents an encounter between people with divergent backgrounds. By bringing different kinds of people face to face, it can shift the boundaries of the familiar through surprising events (Ahmed 2000: 6). As a liminal experience that brings people out of their comfort zones, it contains the possibility for transformative change for any party involved – it can "chip away at prejudices, enact cultural destabilisations, shape subjectivities, and produce new knowledges" (Wilson 2017: 606). Intercultural encounters and contacts always include risks of misperception, misunderstanding, and cognitive dissonance (Mitchell and Paras 2018), but at their best they include the possibility for an expanded worldview and an understanding of the interconnectedness of humanity.

Case Studies

Two locations which have been popular among song tourists in the past decade are the Pilpani home in Lenjeri and the Chamgeliani home in Lakhushdi (both in Svaneti, and less than half an hour apart by vehicle). Both homes are located in rural communities some distance from larger population centres. Each one represents a family enterprise in which song teaching has played an important role. These families have had to adopt certain elements of self-promotion and entrepreneurialism. Successful entrepreneurs of folk culture possess a cosmopolitan consciousness (Turino 2000), understanding the appeal of concepts like "authenticity", "ancientness", "ritual", "village life", and "tradition" to Westerners. They provide not merely songs, but a carefully guided introduction to an exotic and fascinating way of life. In this section, I will describe these two families for a deeper understanding of song tourism in Georgia.

Dynastic Enterprise in Lenjeri

Vakhtang Pilpani was inspired to start a guesthouse after several foreign groups (starting with members of Trio Kavkasia in 1995) came to learn songs from his father, Islam Pilpani. When thirty singers from Village Harmony came in 2002, the Pilpanis were only able to host everyone with the help of relatives who lived nearby. By 2014, Vakhtang, himself a singer and musician, had learned English (Islam never learned more than a few phrases), built a dining/teaching room suitable for forty to fifty people, and added a second level to his house featuring numerous guestrooms, some with new ensuite bathrooms. He has continued to remodel the family home every year, improving it for the greater comfort of his guests. Song camps with Islam typically featured two or three hours of lessons per day, in which he would exclusively teach Svan songs like "Lile", "Jragish", or "Lazhghvash" – usually at least one

in which he would play *chuniri*. Some students expressed an interest in instrument lessons and had the opportunity to buy a *chuniri* built by Vakhtang. Sometimes Vakhtang would help by teaching round dances or clarifying certain points about the songs, but Islam was the unquestioned musical authority, befitting his reputation as a revered songmaster. The rest of the day featured short excursions and hikes to scenic areas nearby and would invariably end with a feast.

By 2016, Vakhtang estimated that 50% of the guests who stayed with his family were regular tourists, visiting Svaneti to hike, camp, take in the natural beauty, and explore the culture, but with no specific interest in folk music. While Islam handled the song lessons, Vakhtang was responsible for coordinating the other aspects of song tours: arranging transportation from Tbilisi, coordinating trips to Mestia or Ushguli, pointing out souvenir shops, and guiding guests on short hikes. His wife Manoni planned out all the meals and hired additional village women to help out in the kitchen, while their three children served food and translated. While Vakhtang inherited his father's position as the director of Riho, Upper Svaneti's regional ensemble, he views the guesthouse as necessary to his family's survival, since it provides their main source of income. In 2016, he decided to brand the family business "Guesthouse Nanila" after a Svan lullaby that Islam claimed to have written. While his guesthouse has a social media presence, most guests find them by word of mouth. As Vakhtang told me in March of 2016, "after visiting everyone gives a recommendation to their relatives or friends. I don't have a very high-quality hotel but I have a nice situation because it's not a noisy place and I have a yard. Some people want to avoid being in the center of Mestia where there is a lot of dust, lots of cars and noise, and now many guests come here on the recommendation of my former guests".

Given the increasingly glutted tourism market in Svaneti (see Kaganova 2021), using music to set the family guesthouse apart from the dozens of similar home businesses in Lenjeri and Mestia is a savvy business move. Even though the vast majority of tourists are not in Georgia specifically to learn songs, some of them may still find one guesthouse's offering of live local music interesting enough to choose it over another. Vakhtang sometimes invites a limited number of Riho members to attend *supras* at the guesthouse, where they perform for tourists in *chokhas*; at other times, he gets his children to perform together with him.

Islam Pilpani passed away in March 2017, but since then Vakhtang has continued to host groups of singers, as well as general tourists. As mentioned earlier, besides his own guesthouse, Vakhtang is on call with other hospitality establishments in Svaneti to offer concerts of traditional Svan music. Larger hotels in Mestia or Becho offer the possibility of booking a group of Svan musicians to perform a private concert. Once contracted, Vakhtang and a few of his closest friends and relatives in Riho perform round dances, demonstrate the *chuniri* and *changi*, educate their audiences about Svan and Georgian culture, sing a few Georgian-language *panduri* pop-folk songs, and even perform a few foreign-language songs with guitar depending on the origin of their audience. Over the years, he has developed an entertaining 75-minute program that guests respond to enthusiastically.

By hiring relations and friends to work with his cultural tourism enterprise, Vakhtang is a node for trickle-down wealth. He has established a niche in cultural tourism as an "ethnopreneur" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009), turning the marketable aspects of his own background into economic capital. As Helen

Rees notes, musicians who perform for tourists for years carry out a kind of “applied ethnography” of their audiences, quickly learning what they find appealing and adjusting their act to contain more of those aspects (Rees 2002). This is not to say that Vakhtang views tourism and modernization uncritically or thinks that they will bring only good things. As he told me, while recordings serve to preserve traditional songs and customs, it is better when people perform a ritual for its own sake rather than for the microphone or lens. After a few decades there will be fewer rituals than today, but he believes that “it is life” and this process cannot be reversed.

Community-Based Tourism and Cultural Sustainability in Lakhushdi

In Lakhushdi, Madona Chamgeliani and her associates have imagined small-scale cultural tourism precisely as a way to revive valued, endangered rural traditions like the rituals Vakhtang Pilpani sees disappearing. Around 2010, some villagers felt that their small community of about one hundred inhabitants was in trouble – its population was dwindling, and the youth didn’t seem interested in carrying on the rich customs connected to traditional religion, handicrafts, and arts. Although Lakhushdi is a part of the Latali community that is only twenty minutes’ drive west of Mestia, it is a steep half-hour walk away from the main highway up an unpaved road that is difficult to maintain, with correspondingly limited access to services and opportunities. Unlike communities closer to major thoroughfares or tourist destinations, at that time residents of Lakhushdi had little opportunity to turn their homes into guesthouses, since tourists rarely ventured there without a specific purpose.

Members of the Chamgeliani family, in collaboration with Nana Mzhavanadze and a Scottish partner with a love for Georgian culture, Madge Bray, devised a strategy where they would invite a group of foreigners to join them in Lakhushdi, dubbed “The Singing Village”, for ten days, culminating in the joint celebration of a late July festival at a mountaintop chapel. Interestingly, this accords with a model that has been analyzed within tourism studies, wherein “thematic villages”, often those lacking obvious resources for development, brand themselves based on a single distinctive idea. This arises “from a need to generate an alternative source of income and foster a feeling of community and pride in declining rural areas” (Graja-Zwolińska et al. 2020). While I stated earlier that polyphony’s appeal is not broad enough to serve as a master trope for a national tourism strategy, it has certainly been used effectively on a smaller scale. Further, Georgian polyphony connects to many other elements of Georgian culture that can be employed in a tourism experience chain: food, wine and liquor, dance, ritual, agriculture, and crafts.

An early program description of the “Singing Village” drew many of these elements into the experience and explicitly mentioned conservation, eco-tourism, and social enterprise:

Guests [will] live with village families, learn ritual songs, and women’s cradle songs. Instead of assuming the role of interested tourist onlookers, they [will] become full participants in an ancient village celebration ceremony... They [will] spin, make herbal remedies, walk in the mountains, gather the harvest, learn cheese making, teach English, sing round bonfires, share their own traditions, visit local churches, pan for gold, and eat delicious organic home produced food, learning the art of toasting at evening supras (Bray and Mzhavanadze 2013).

All local arrangements were handled by villagers, and most of the households became involved. Tourists' fees went to improve village infrastructure: installing a lamp in the central square and showers and flush toilets in the homes of hosts. The foreigners' presence and interest in Svan culture were meant to inspire Svan youth to value their own heritage. (For more on the inaugural song camp in 2011, see Bithell 2014b.) According to Bray, the primary purpose of the Lakhushdi program was conservation: keeping something alive and concentrated in one place as much as possible, through a social enterprise model where people could make money sustainably. In her words, she wanted it to "facilitate people to... maintain their own culture if possible, and to develop their own ways of trying to get into the twenty-first century".

For several years, the "Singing Village" camp was held every summer, usually coinciding with the celebration of a religious festival to allow visitors to experience local traditions personally. Mzhavanadze and Bray were intimately involved for some time, facilitating the teaching of songs, sometimes taught by elderly village men and sometimes by Chamgeliani sisters Ana and Madona. Today, the Chamgelianis have taken most of the leadership. Madona, a very knowledgeable folklorist, provides extensive ethnographic information and leads tours explaining local architecture and important ritual sites, like Tanghili Church located at the top of a nearby hill. The "Singing Village" camps continue to be held yearly, but other groups also make their way to Lakhushdi, whether choirs like London's Maspindzeli, or ad hoc tour groups organized by Zoe Perret or Levan Bitarovi.

Madona hoped to limit large group visits to two or three a year, not wanting the village to become dependent on tourism. With the tourist money, she has started a co-operative fund used for various local development projects or to aid locals who encounter medical emergencies or have long-term disabilities. However, she has expressed some misgivings about the project, telling me that she hates dealing with money and does not even want tourism in her town. Indeed, she insists on referring to "guests" rather than tourists (similarly, many participants in alternative tourism regard themselves as "travellers" but not tourists). What Madona means is that she prefers people who will stay for a longer period, become friends with locals, return to the village, and maintain relationships.

Madona has noticed changing attitudes toward money and hospitality in her village—now, anyone who performs even a brief task expects to be paid personally rather than donating to the fund, and elderly singers will not sing around outsiders unless they receive money. Some villagers gossiped that Madona was skimming off the tourist money for her own use; imagining that she was wealthy due to her large number of foreign friends, they frequently came to her with financial requests that she was unable to fulfill. Interestingly, one of Madge Bray's hopes in starting the Lakhushdi project was to avoid the commoditization of culture. As behavioural economist Dan Ariely argues, once money has been introduced into a situation, it becomes almost impossible to return to a friendship/gift frame (Ariely 2010).

The money brought into the community by the "Singing Village" project has undoubtedly improved the living conditions of many villagers. But one challenge is what I refer to as the "Shangri-La Paradox": successful alternative tourism destinations are often prized precisely because they seem undeveloped and undiscovered, lending them an air of authenticity. Once these sites attract more tourists, locals gain more money and living standards increase, but with a perceived loss of authenticity that can eventually cause tourists to turn away. As one travel website wrote about Svaneti in 2017, "New concrete guesthouses

are being built randomly, without any permission. But they're incompatible with the local cultural and architectural heritage and ultimately spoil the picturesque landscape... And the famous Svan hospitality is vanishing" (M. Mills 2017). Small rural communities that wish to remain compelling tourist destinations need to consider the effects of new developments, so they do not interfere with their historic character and unique qualities.

Economic development can certainly occur along with cultural revitalization. In some cases, like Bulgarian mumming practices, endangered rituals have indeed been preserved by opening them up to tourism (Creed 2011). Lakhushdi does continue to celebrate community rituals like Lipanal, Lamproba, the Likuriel procession, and a busy liturgical calendar that includes animal offerings and community-specific hymns such as "Tskhau Krisdesh", a song that is invariably taught to foreign singer guests. However, there are risks involved too. Swanson and DeVereaux determine that cultural tourism has had mixed results for many declining communities and minority groups: while it may lead to a resurgence of traditional arts or practices, associated risks include commodification, compromises to traditional practices, and "cultural misunderstandings leading to a lack of respect for traditions and values" (Swanson and DeVereaux 2017: 79). Li Yang argues that cultural or "ethnic" tourism prioritizes the needs of tourists, who want to experience primitive, pre-modern, exotic, and joyful practices rather than anything that accurately represents the current lifestyle of the people being visited. Such efforts can freeze minority ethnic groups in time, stereotype and standardize them, and stress only the most colorful practices (Yang 2011). Many song tourists are aware of the mixed impact they bring to Georgia. As Australia's Therese Virtue told me, "One of the ways of saving these songs and this culture is to make it a draw for tourists, and it's also one of the ways of destroying it". While some eco-tourists might harbor unrealistic (and unfair) desires that certain societies remain stuck in a pre-industrial past, in reflexive moments they are able to "experience authenticity in the context of the commoditization of culture, because a humanistic orientation makes them have an empathic understanding of local people's rights of development" (Gnoth and Wang 2015: 171).

Certainly, it would be unfair for any armchair analyst to propose that impoverished villagers forgo increased comforts simply to maintain some abstract ideal of authenticity. As Regina Bendix writes, "if you have few or no other resources, history and culture prove to be an asset. Social, political, personal, and emotional investment in one's cultural legacy need not be seen as dirtied by economic transactions" (Bendix 2018: 9). Rather, I propose that developments be considered in terms of "culturally sustainable entrepreneurship", which "champions entrepreneurial models that strive for social, environmental and economic balance in decision-making" (Swanson and DeVereaux 2017: 80). The advantage of song study tourism projects is that they are organized at the grassroots family or community level, with the potential for being sensitive to local concerns. Government plans, even if well-intentioned, may be heavy-handed and not very responsive to community needs. Small-scale tourism thus contradicts the "path dependency" noted by some analysts of tourism in Georgia, wherein would-be entrepreneurs operate out of a Soviet mentality, expecting the government to lead (Bakhtadze Engländer and Robitashvili 2020).

Certainly, Madona Chamgeliani's vision for her community includes cultural, social, environmental, and economic sustainability. Most recently, her family has been building a "House of Song" that will

include sixteen guestrooms, a conference room, a concert space, and several classrooms. In a crowdfunding campaign that ran in 2020, the Chamgelianis described “the need for a communal space where we might revive the transmission of artisans’ knowledge of all kinds, a cultural centre where members of the younger generation can learn local handicrafts. A space where special events can be presented, as well as a regular daily exchange of traditional know-how”. The community centre is intended not simply to host foreigners, but to bring student groups from other parts of Georgia to learn songs and crafts; the project description also mentions job generation and an improved economic situation (<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/lakhushdi-house-of-song#/>). At the time of writing, the House of Song is near completion, with many singers scheduled to visit in 2023. Hopefully, it will succeed in its mission, continuing to promote cultural revitalization in Lakhushdi and Svaneti more broadly.

Song Tourism in Crisis

While overnight stays in Georgia by foreign visitors dropped precipitously in 2020 and 2021, 2022 saw numbers return to more than half of their 2019 peak. Song teachers, hosts, and guides I have talked to all agree that visits are significantly down. For some foreigners, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and all the geopolitical instability it has caused, make the entire region too risky to visit. Others continue to worry about health risks.

Some singing teachers with guesthouses have been able to refocus their attention solely on Georgian tourists. This is particularly true of the Turmanidze family in Merisi Village, Zemo Achara. Two summers before the pandemic started, the Turmanidzes were already hosting many non-singing guests for culinary day trips. The family would receive a call and then prepare a full course supra for fifty or sixty people. In the summer of 2018, they were so busy with this sort of work that they only had one or two unoccupied days in two months. Polyphony may serve as one element in an experience value chain, and it helps when a single family possesses diverse talents—a value chain under one roof. In the case of the Turmanidzes, the father Jemal and children Rezo, Beso, and Khatia are all singers, while the mother Manana is a very skilled cook. This has allowed them to pivot between different types of tourism as circumstances change.

At the time of writing in late 2022, it is still too early to determine whether the enormous curtailment of tourism during the pandemic years is a temporary disruption, or if significantly smaller numbers of travellers will become the norm. Tourism providers who are able to offer a diverse set of experiences will be better able to handle changing demands and possibilities.

Conclusion

While only the bravest of singers travelled to Georgia independently to learn music twenty years ago, it is now much easier for interested foreigners to learn Georgian music firsthand. Using online translation programs, travel wikis, and social media, dedicated singers can contact Georgian musicians from afar and plan out independent travel itineraries. However, the package song study tour will remain a convenient option for learning music and experiencing Georgian culture, especially for singers who have not travelled to Georgia often. Even for more experienced foreign singers, song tourism camps can be extremely enjoyable events where they get to share their love for Georgia with friends and even

take on a partial role of expert and intermediary. Georgian musicians can supplement their income and establish contacts with foreigners who may help them with lucrative performing and teaching tours abroad. Further, both sides can engage in an intercultural dialogue that can broaden worldviews and promote global citizenship.

Mirjana Laušević writes, “a deep understanding of a culture does not come automatically with even the most precisely executed dance step or sequence of notes, but comes as a result of continued contact and thoughtful engagement with the culture and people” (Laušević 2007: 239). At its best, song study tourism offers a form of thoughtful engagement between Georgians and foreigners, particularly as relationships develop between repeat visitors and their teachers and hosts. As a “boundary object” that allows for intercultural engagement even where there is no common language (UNESCO 2013: 17), polyphonic song creates conditions for shared meaningful experience. Learning to listen carefully to others with different life experiences will not solve all the problems of our world, but it is a step in the right direction.

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CHAPTER 8

COMPUTATIONAL ETHNOMUSICOLOGY OF TRADITIONAL GEORGIAN MUSIC

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NOVEL REPRESENTATIONS OF TRADITIONAL GEORGIAN VOCAL MUSIC IN TIMES OF ONLINE ACCESS

1. Introduction

Traditional Georgian polyphonic vocal music, which was originally passed down from generation to generation by oral tradition, is currently facing the challenge of the disappearance of the old ways of immersion in traditional music making. In contrast, the international interest of scientists and music lovers in traditional Georgian singing has been growing since the UNESCO declaration as part of the “Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity” (2001)¹. Professional and amateur ensembles around the world have included traditional Georgian vocal music into their repertoires, “music tourism” to Georgia has been booming in recent years, and Georgian singing teachers regularly perform and teach abroad. Moreover, new ways of merging traditional Georgian music with various other trends of music making have emerged, e.g., in the form of Georgian folk-fusion music (Lomsadze, 2019). Fortunately, one can also observe (and listen to) a new generation of talented young Georgian musicians who devote themselves to cultivating traditional Georgian music.

Therefore, it may not seem that traditional Georgian vocal music as such is an endangered genre. What has obviously changed, however, is the ways in which the music is passed on from teachers to students, especially since the time of the COVID pandemic, when personal contacts had to be minimized. Nowadays, virtual internet meetings have become a popular teaching approach, and studying from scores and/or YouTube videos has become a common learning method. At a higher sophistication level, teaching CDs, often offered in sets with scores in 5-line staff notation, provide audible access to individual voice tracks (usually accompanied by a stereo mix of all voices). All of these are important tools, created with a great deal of love for the music and lots of effort, which deserve grateful recognition. But should

¹ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/georgian-polyphonic-singing-00008> [accessed, October 20, 2022]

we leave it at that? Are these tools still the most appropriate form of representing traditional Georgian music, or should we use different approaches today?

The Austrian composer Gustav Mahler (1860–1911) is (wrongly) quoted as having said “Keeping tradition alive does not mean to pray to the ashes but to pass on the flame”.² The question we have asked ourselves in this context is how computer-based methods and web-based techniques developed in our research project “Computational Analysis of Traditional Georgian Vocal Music (GVM)”³ can contribute to “passing on the flame” in ways that do justice to the essential musical aspects of the traditional music and overcome some of the limitations of current teaching materials.

Within the last century, the originally oral transmission of traditional (Georgian) vocal music has changed dramatically. The first mechanical and later electromagnetic field recording capabilities of sound and the associated acoustic reproducibility led to the first immense changes in the transmission mechanisms. The advent of the Internet and today’s easy access to web-based audiovisual representations has enabled further significant changes in the documentation and transmission of traditional Georgian vocal music. With the present paper, we want to discuss three different case studies of novel audiovisual and partially web-based representations of traditional Georgian vocal music making use of modern technology and computational approaches, each of which is geared towards a different purpose.

With the first example, which consists of a series of YouTube videos of the Tbilisi State Conservatory recordings of Artem Erkomaishvili from the year 1966, discussed in Section 2, we want to demonstrate how computational tools and audiovisual representations can contribute to the preservation of an important set of historic recordings in a digital and more interactive form.

The second example, discussed in Section 3, illustrates how a newly developed web-interface allows users to engage with a new set of multi-media (audio, video, and larynx microphones) field recordings of traditional Georgian vocal music (GVM dataset) in a variety of ways. In this context, to overcome the limitations caused by the representation of non-tempered music in Western 5-line staff notation, we (semi-automatically) analyze the individual tuning system for each song and visualize the separate voices as multi-voice F0-trajectories and “note objects” superimposed on the used F0-distribution (pitch inventory). For display, we have developed a new web-interface together with a video-audio player which combines the playback of video with an existing multitrack audio player to control the gains of the individual voices in real-time. This allows completely new ways to immerse in and interact with these types of recordings not only for documentation and analysis, but also for educational purposes.

Finally, in the third example, discussed in Section 4. We illustrate how modern digital tools can be used to generate internet-based audiovisual teaching/learning scenarios in which students can sing along with selected individual voices or a virtual ensemble.

² According to the blogpost https://falschzitate.blogspot.com/2017/06/tradition-ist-die-weitergabe-des-feuers_10.html [accessed, October 20, 2022], the true author of this metaphor is the French socialist Jean Jaurès, who is said to have coined it in a speech to the French Parliament on January 21, 1910.

³ Since chanting was prohibited during the Soviet era, these chants might have been lost without these recordings.

2. A new access to the Tbilisi State Conservatoire recordings of Artem Erkomaishvili (1966)

Artem Erkomaishvili (1887–1967, Fig. 1) was a key representative of traditional Georgian singing of the 20th century and one of the last master singers of Georgian liturgical chant (Erkomaishvili, 2017; Graham, 2015). In 1966, one year before his death, he was asked to perform all voices of a series of chants to save them for posterity⁴. Due to the lack of fellow singers, he had to sing all the voices by himself. His performances, part of which were recently remastered (Jgharkava 2016), were recorded at the Tbilisi State Conservatoire using two tape recorders through what is now called overdubbing. This recording collection is one of the oldest of Georgian chants and therefore of outstanding value for the Georgian cultural heritage and the understanding of the tuning principles of traditional Georgian vocal music (Graham, 2015; Scherbaum et al., 2020).

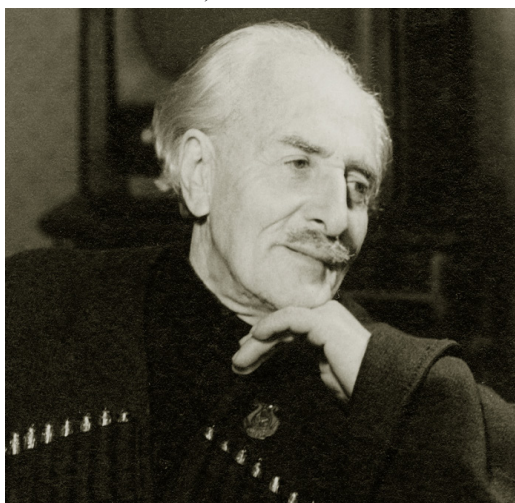


Figure 1 Artem Erkomaishvili (1887–1967). Photo provided by Anzor Erkomaishvili.

The starting point for its presentation as YouTube videos is the re-release of the original audio data together with the estimated fundamental frequency (F_0) trajectories, beat annotations, and digital scores for each of the three voices (Rosenzweig et al., 2020). The digital scores are based on transcriptions of (Shugliashvili, 2014). To enable a low-barrier access to the annotated corpus for interdisciplinary collaboration, we developed a web-based interface⁵ integrating the score-following functionality presented in (Zalkow et al., 2018). The interface allows for switching between the individual voices of the performances while synchronously highlighting the sung notes in the score-based transcription. For long-term preservation and immediate access, we additionally screen-captured the interface's output of all performances, playing back the three voices and a mix of all voices sequentially. The resulting videos are hosted on YouTube and can conveniently be accessed via a playlist⁶.

⁴ <https://www.audiolabs-erlangen.de/resources/MIR/2019-GeorgianMusic-Erkomaishvili> [accessed, October 20, 2022]

⁵ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLs9CCVIpRRzi2cw_jJ2NH4vH7AZ1k-Mzv [accessed, October 20, 2022]

⁶ Recorded on August 19, 2016, at the home of the Chamgeliani family, Lakhushdi Village, Latali community. Singers: Murad Pirtskhelān (71) middle voice, Gigo Chamgelian (77) top voice, Givi Pirtskhelān (79) bass voice. The hymn belongs

The primary goal of this contribution is to preserve (in a modern form) this unique collection, documenting the performance practice and musical thinking of an outstanding singer of the last century.

3. A new audiovisual representation of multi-media field recordings of traditional Georgian vocal music

The second case study aims to explore new perspectives on the audiovisual representation of non-tempered polyphonic vocal music. For this purpose, we make use of the specific properties of a new set of multimedia field recordings of traditional Georgian vocal music which were collected by Frank Scherbaum and Nana Mzhavanadze during a field expedition in 2016 and which we refer to as the “GVM dataset” (Scherbaum et al., 2019). It consists of video recordings and audio recordings using conventional stereo, headset, and larynx microphones, all synchronized to a common time code. Whenever possible, one singer from each voice group was recorded with a pair of headset and larynx microphones. This way, in addition to a stereo microphone recording of the whole ensemble, separate recordings were obtained for each of the (typically three) voices of the recorded performances, one larynx microphone for computational analysis and one headset microphone for high quality (Fig. 2). Larynx microphone recordings are extremely useful for the automatic calculation of F0 trajectories (pitch trajectories) since they capture a singer’s voice more or less unaffected by cross talk from neighboring singers (Scherbaum 2016).

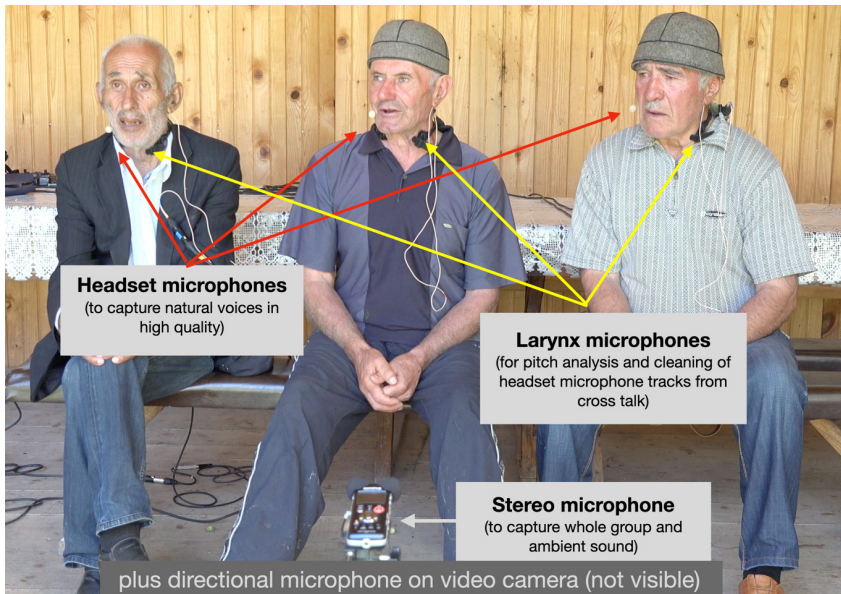


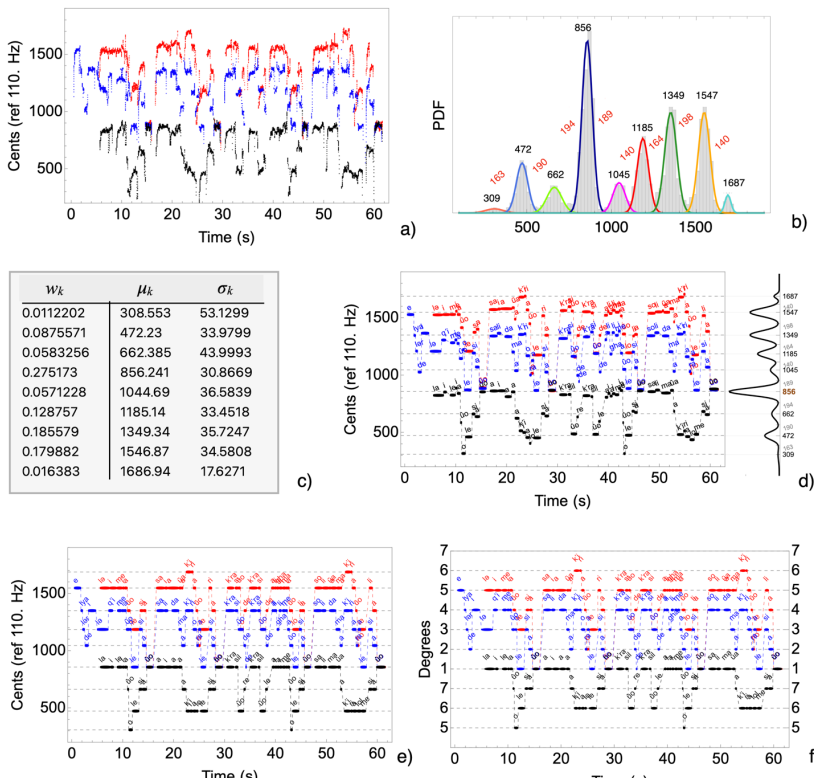
Figure 2 Typical recording setup used for the GVM collection.

to several sacred ritual repertoires, most of which are believed to have ancient origins. Much of the hymn’s verbal text, as in many other songs of this type, is meaningless and based mainly on syllables and vowels, thus creating a rich foundation for various interpretations. According to the locals, this hymn is sung by the Mestia community on the Feast of White St. George.

3.1. Accounting for non-western tuning systems

In the field of ethnomusicology, the transcription of musical sound into a symbolic representation is commonly considered a fixed part of any analysis of oral tradition music (Ciantar 1996). Although there is agreement amongst ethnomusicologists that the tonal organization of traditional Georgian vocal music does not correspond to a 12-tone equal-temperament (12-TET) tuning system (Jordania 2022), most transcriptions still use Western 5-line staff notation. Still, it forces the music into an inappropriate tuning system and ignores microtonality (at least in its unmodified form). Western notation remains popular, possibly because it compresses information very effectively and can capture many aspects of the music such as dynamics and temporal structure. But does that mean it is still the best approach for all purposes?

In Fig. 3 we explore several alternative visual representation forms which have become possible because of the specific properties of the GVM dataset. Our goal in this context is to visualize the individual voices in a form that is intuitive to understand, and which requires essentially no assumptions regarding the used tuning system. The only assumption that we make is that the cents scale (Ellis 1885) is appropriately representing how humans perceive differences in pitch (with 100 cents corresponding to 1 semitone). Since the GVM dataset contains separate larynx microphone recordings from each of the singer’s voices, which are essentially unaffected by cross talk from other voices, it is straightforward to generate individual F0 trajectories using monophonic pitch tracking algorithms such as PYIN (Mauch & Dixon, 2014).



Figures 3 a) F0 trajectories for the song “Elia Lrde” (GVM031). b) F0 histogram and Gaussian mixture distribution (one colored Gaussian per pitch cluster). c) Parameters of the Gaussian mixture model. d) Display of the sequences of note objects produced by the Tony program (Mauch et al. 2015) (which was also used to assign the lyrics). e) Same sequence of note objects as in d) with pitches projected onto the mean value of their corresponding clusters. f) Same sequence of notes as in e) but with vertical scale changed to scale degrees.

Fig. 3a shows the raw F0 trajectories for the song “Elia Lrde” from Svaneti (GVM031)⁷. The red, blue, and black curves correspond to the top, middle, and bass voice, respectively. Raw F0 trajectories include all the microtonal details of a particular recording of a song, without making any assumptions regarding the underlying tuning system.

To obtain a first visual impression of the actual melodic tuning system used, we combine all F0 samples from all three voices of the song into a single “pitch histogram” (gray-shaded histogram in Fig. 3b). Subsequently, we model the corresponding F0 sample distribution with a so-called Gaussian Mixture model (GMM). This is simply a weighted sum of individual Gaussian distributions $\mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2)$ with mean value μ and standard deviation σ , one for each pitch group. In the case of K pitch groups, this results in a representation as $\sum_k w_k \mathcal{N}(\mu_k, \sigma_k^2)$. The mean values of the individual Gaussians (the μ_k) correspond to the center values of the individual pitch clusters in the pitch histogram while the standard deviations of the Gaussians (the σ_k) define the associated pitch variability. The w_k represents the individual weighting factors, in other words, how much a particular sound scale degree is present in a set of pitch trajectories. The black numbers on top of the pitch clusters in Fig. 3b show the μ_k -values of the corresponding mixture elements, while the tilted red numbers between two pitch groups correspond to the corresponding intervals in cents. The corresponding numerical parameters w_k , μ_k and σ_k are displayed in Fig. 3c.

The pitch histogram in Fig. 3b shows a strongly clustered structure with eight separate pitch clusters per octave (1200 cents). Each of the pitch clusters can be seen to represent an individual melodic sound scale degree. Therefore, the Gaussian mixture model calculated this way provides a very compact and purely data-driven representation of the tuning system used in the particular recording of the song, constituting a natural reference frame to replace the Western 12 TET system for the visualization of the F0 trajectories⁸.

The raw F0 trajectories, however, do not seem very well suited as a replacement of Western 5-line staff notation since they usually contain numerous artifacts which are not perceived as musical notes. Roughly speaking, one could say that the visual image of raw F0 trajectories is still too complex for practical purposes, such as teaching or learning a song. One way to reduce the complexity of the visualization and to approximate better what is perceived as “note objects” is to remove sliding phases and other artifacts by applying suitable filtering techniques (Rosenzweig et al. 2019). An alternative approach, in which a sequence of note objects is generated from an F0 trajectory using a Hidden Mar-

⁷ It is worth noting that the raw F0 trajectories still contain sliding phases and other (non-musical aspects) and can also be subject to continuous slow pitch drifts. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of the tonal organization of a set of recordings usually requires a more elaborated workflow (Scherbaum et al., 2022; Scherbaum & Mzhavanadze, 2020).

⁸ <https://www.audiolabs-erlangen.de/resources/MIR/GVMPPlayerInfo> [accessed, October 20, 2022]

kov Model (HMM), is provided by the Tony software (Mauch et al. 2015). Even though being more time-consuming than applying filtering techniques, with the resulting note objects having been found to be very similar to the note objects obtained through morphological filtering (Scherbaum et al. 2020), the Tony software also allows a user to interactively edit and assign lyrics to the individual note objects. This is illustrated in Fig. 3d. This type of display, which we refer to as a melograph plot, still captures the microtonality of the song but reduces the information to a perceptually manageable amount. It can be seen in Fig. 3d that the pitches of the individual note objects fluctuate slightly but one can still visually identify the average pitches for each scale degree. Because of these fluctuations, it will still be difficult if not impossible to sing from such a display because it does not become clear what features are ornamental or caused by pitch instabilities of the singer and what features are intended. To address this problem, in Fig. 3e we have mapped the fluctuating note pitches for all note objects of a pitch group to the corresponding group's center value, the μ_k value. This results in a piano-roll-like display type which could be used as a "normative" representation of the song in the sense that it could be interpreted as what the singers intended to sing. It visually reflects the underlying tuning system but not the microtonal fluctuations. Finally, as an example for teaching, if one is not interested in actual pitches but only the scale degrees, one could add some additional musicological interpretation and change the vertical coordinate system to integer numbers representing scale degrees (in this case with reference to the pitch of the final bass note which is assigned scale degree 1, similar to how some singing teachers use their fingers to indicate a particular scale degree).

1.2. The GVM Player

Within the GVM (Georgian Vocal Music) project⁹ and specially designed to explore new perspectives for audiovisual representation of the GVM dataset, we modified the pywebaudioplayer of (Pauwels & Sandler 2018) to what we refer to as the "GVM Player"¹⁰. The original player allows for individual control of the audio tracks' volumes. We extended this player using a component to synchronously play back a video stream. This opens new paths for interacting with the music, e.g., for educational purposes. By amplifying or attenuating individual voices, various "pseudo ensemble tracks" can be easily generated, greatly extending the famous "Music Minus One" concept to the GVM collection. It also overcomes the limitations of currently popular educational material, such as YouTube videos and teaching CDs, which have very little if any options to interact with the music. Furthermore, by using the different visualization perspectives discussed in Section 3.1 and illustrated in Fig. 3, we also try to do justice to the non-tempered tuning systems used by many traditional Georgian singers. This is illustrated in more detail in Section 3.3.3.

⁹ <https://www.audiolabs-erlangen.de/resources/MIR/GVMPlayerInfo> [accessed, October 20, 2022]

¹⁰ <https://www.audiolabs-erlangen.de/resources/MIR/GVMPlayer/> [accessed, October 20, 2022]

3.3. Display Modes

Research and experience indicate that learning is facilitated when teachers use a variety of techniques that are purposefully selected to achieve specific learning goals (National Research Council, 2002). To accommodate this strategy in the current context, we have implemented prototypes of five different display modes which can be seen as representing different scenarios. All of these can be accessed through what we refer to as the “GVM Interface”,¹¹ In order to discuss all the different display modes, we use five songs from a collection for which the raw field recordings were presented by (Scherbaum et al., 2019) and for which the original (unprocessed) recordings are easily accessible through the web-based track-switch interface (Werner et al., 2017)¹².

The song selection starts from the top panel of the GVM interface’s main menu which is shown in Fig. 4 and from which different songs and display modes can be selected.

No	GVMID	Song Name	Recording Session (Video)	Audio Mix (Audio)	F0 Trajectories (Video)	Pseudo Score (Video)	Karaoke (Video)	Meta Information (PDF)
1	GVM019	Dale Koja	Play	Play	Play	Play	Play	Show Info
2	GVM009	Batonebis Nanina	Play	Play	Play	Play	Play	Show Info
3	GVM017	Chven Mshvidoba	Play	Play	Play	Play	Play	Show Info
4	GVM097	Kriste Aghsdga	Play	Play	Play	Play	Play	Show Info
5	GVM031	Elia Lrde	Play	Play	Play	Play	Play	Show Info

Teaching/Learning Scenario			
No.	Identifier	Song	Play
1	MID001	Guruli Sabodisho	Click

Figure 4 Main Menu of the GVM-Interface.¹² The bottom panel corresponds to the Teaching/Learning scenario discussed in Section 4.

3.3.1 Recording Session Mode

In this display mode, the recording location, the relative position of the singers as well as their (non-verbal) communication during the recording session can be observed while listening to their performance (Fig. 5).

¹¹ <https://www.audiolabs-erlangen.de/resources/MIR/2018-ISMIR-LBD-ThroatMics> [accessed, October 20, 2022]

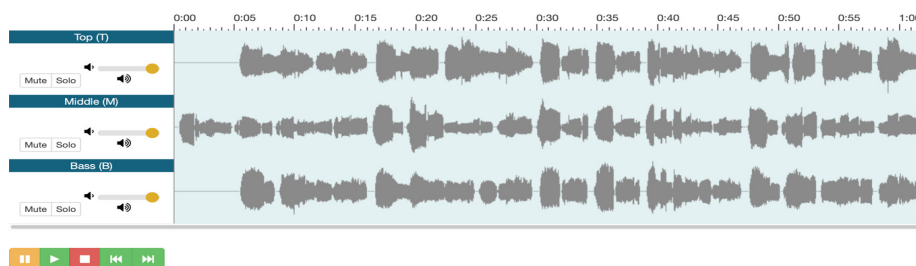
¹² Since pitch is a psychoacoustic quantity which cannot be measured directly, F0 trajectories can be seen as a quantitative approximation to the actual sung pitches. It needs to be emphasized again, however, that F0 trajectories not only capture sung notes but also other details of the intonation process, as well as other acoustic events such as swallowing and clearing the throat. For example, the screen image shows sliding phases at the beginning and end of notes, which are quite typical for the Svan intonation style.



Figure 5 In the “Recording Session Mode”, the long shot video of the original recording session of the selected song can be watched while listening to the recording of the stereo microphone in front of the singers.

3.3.2 Audio Mix Mode

Selecting this mode starts the original pywebaudioplayer (Pauwels & Sandler, 2018) (Fig. 6) for the three headset microphone tracks, for which the cross talk has been somewhat reduced by using the information about the voice activity of each singer contained in the corresponding larynx microphone recording. This mode is intended for users who are not interested in the video and want to spare themselves the overhead of the video player.



Interface of the pywebaudioplayer (Pauwels & Sandler, 2018).

3.3.3 F0 Trajectory Mode

In the “F0 Trajectory Mode”, which is the most elaborate display mode implemented in the GVM player framework so far, the GVM player is started with three different display panels as shown in Fig. 7. The bottom panel corresponds to the interface of the pywebaudioplayer also shown in Fig. 6. The left top panel shows close-ups of the three singers’ faces with the lyrics of the song displayed as subtitles. To the

right, the F0 trajectories (pitch tracks) are displayed together with the multi-voice note tracks for the sung notes in a “scrolling mode” where a time window of roughly 20 seconds duration (including the actual playhead cursor position) is shown and updated at regular intervals (similar to page turning of sheet music or scores). On startup, this display panel shows the F0 trajectories of the complete song which during playback is replaced by the shorter 20 second time window. Fig. 7. shows an annotated screen image of the playback of our running example, the song “Elia Lrde”, taken at roughly 9 seconds into the song.

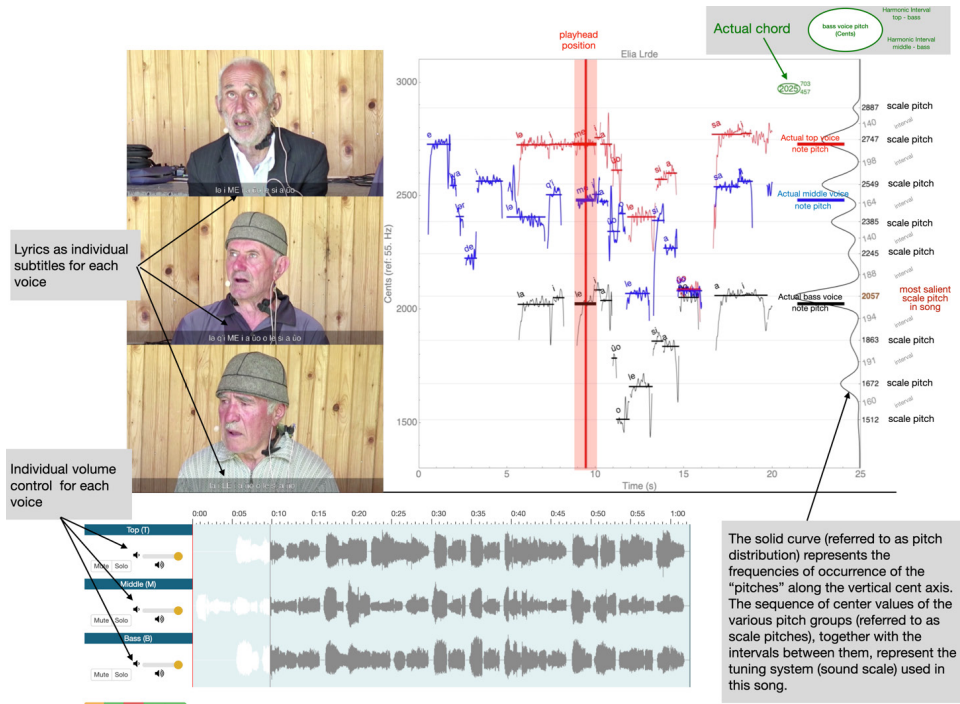


Figure 7 Screen image of the GVM Player in “F0 Trajectory Display Mode”, taken at roughly 9 seconds into the playback of the song “Elia Lrde”. For details see text.

In the “F0 Trajectory Display Mode”, the display, in addition to showing the F0 trajectories, contains several analytical tools. The red vertical cursor (here superimposed by a transparent red bar for better visibility) marks the actual position of the playhead, in other words identifies what one hears at a particular moment. The solid curve on the right (referred to as pitch distribution) represents the frequencies of occurrence distribution of the “pitches”¹³ along the vertical cents axis. The sequence of center values of the various pitch groups, referred to as scale pitches, correspond to the μ_k values of the Gaussian mixture model discussed in Section 3.1. Together with the intervals between them, they represent the tuning system (melodic sound scale) used in this song. The horizontal lines superimposed on the pitch

¹³ This is already a considerable simplification in relation to a western score notation where the perceived difference between two notes also depends on the key of the score.

distribution show the currently sung note pitches for the top, middle, and bass voice in red, blue, and black, respectively. In the upper right of the upper right panel, the actual chord is shown by a green ellipse which indicates the bass note pitch in cents with respect to a chosen reference frequency (for the conversion from Hz to cents). The sub and superscripts show the bass-to-middle voice and bass-to-top voice intervals, respectively. Finally, the lyrics of the song are shown next to the individual notes and subtitles in the singer's videos (with the actual sung syllable enlarged).

The vertical axis is in cents, relative to a chosen reference frequency. As already mentioned in Section 3.1, the use of the "cents scale" (100 cents correspond to a semitone) accounts for the fact that pitch perception is logarithmic. In other words, the perceived pitch difference between two pitches being 100 cents apart is always a semitone, independent of where on the pitch scale it takes place¹⁴). The sung notes (referred to as 'note objects' above) are shown by horizontal lines, color coded in red, blue, and black for the top, middle, and bass voice, respectively. The pitch values of these lines match the corresponding note pitches (as determined by the Tony program) at the time of the cursor position.

The solid black curve on the right side of the display window (marked as pitch distribution and oriented perpendicular to the vertical cents axis) describes the used pitch inventory (i.e., the distribution of F0 values) of the complete song. The area under the Gaussian bell-shaped curve for a single pitch group expresses the salience of the corresponding pitch in the song. The values of the scale pitches in cents are indicated to the right of the location of the corresponding peak of the pitch distribution function, with the scale pitch of the most salient pitch group being shown in red. The size of the intervals between two neighboring scale pitches is indicated by the tilted numbers between two pitch groups. The sequence of scale pitches is also marked in the display window by thin horizontal lines. Together with the intervals between them they represent the tuning system (sound scale) used in the displayed song in a purely "descriptive" sense, i.e., without making any prior assumptions about the tuning. This approach is in line with the "philosophy" of trying to only show what is in the observed data and to leave the interpretation of these measurements and further analysis to the user.

The actual sung pitch values of the individual voices that a listener hears at a particular instance of time are displayed in real-time by color-coded horizontal bars superimposed on the pitch distribution function. This, in addition to what the listener hears at that moment, provides real-time information if a particular voice pitch is below, at, or above a scale pitch.

There is one additional aspect of Fig. 7 which needs to be mentioned. It relates to the harmonic content of a song and the fact that a traditional Georgian song is more than the combination of three melodies sung at the same time. Teaching CDs usually provide the individual voices as isolated melodies. Details of the harmonic interaction between singers, which in live performances can be perceived as very fine-grained mutual (harmonic) intonation adjustments, usually get lost this way. To address this aspect in the GVM player, the actual sung chord (bass voice scale degree and harmonic intervals between bass and middle and bass and top voice in cents in subscript and superscript, respectively) are displayed in real-time by the green chord symbol in the upper right of the display panel. This information not only helps to train harmonic perception ("vertical thinking") but can also be useful for real-time harmonic analysis of a song.

The fact that the GVM player can simultaneously play the audio and the videos of the singers has the side effect of allowing engagement with the recorded material of a performance not only acoustically but also visually, and observation of the non-verbal interaction between singers. To facilitate the perception of a song even further, we display the lyrics of a song for each voice not only on top of individual “note objects”, but also as subtitles in the videos of the individual singers. This can be done in Georgian letters as well as in transcribed Latin letters (as it is done here).

3.3.4 Pseudo-Score Mode

In this display mode, the note pitches have all been mapped to the center pitches of their corresponding pitch group, and the display of the F0 trajectories is suppressed (as an unnecessary detail in this setting) (Fig. 8). In contrast to the F0 trajectory mode which displays exactly the pitches sung by the singers, this mode is an interpretation of what pitch the singers might have wanted to sing, using the pitch group means as a reference. The motivation for this mode comes from the observation that pitch perception is categorical (c.f. Ganguli & Rao, 2019). It is a mode that makes it easier for students to recognize which scale degree was sung. This is why we refer to it tentatively as “Pseudo-Score Mode”. We anticipate this to be the most attractive mode to learn a song, particularly in combination with the volume control for the individual audio tracks.

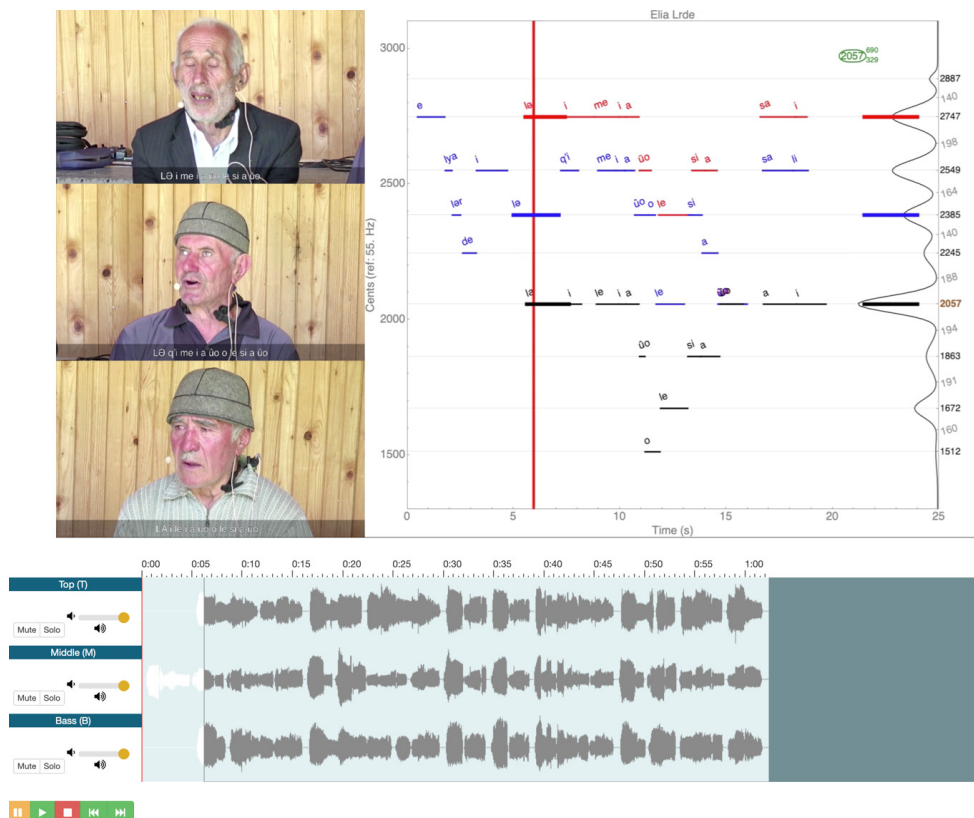


Figure 8 Screen image of the “Pseudo-Score Mode”.

3.3.5 Karaoke Mode

In this mode, we mimic a karaoke situation by displaying only the lyrics together with close-ups of the singers' faces (Fig. 9). Like in the F0 Trajectory mode and the Pseudo-Score mode, the volume of the audio tracks can be individually adjusted (and not just muted as e.g., in the tracks witch interface).



Figure 9 Screen image illustrating the “Karaoke Mode”.

3.3.6 Meta Information

Each recording session during the 2016 field expedition was accompanied by extensive interviews not only with the singers but also with other informants from the villages to collect contextual information regarding the background and history of the singers, about local customs, etc.

Selecting the “Show Info button” under the Meta Information entry will bring up a small subset of this information, e. g., the singers’ names and recording dates (Fig. 10). The complete field reports can be obtained from the LaZAR-Database.¹⁴

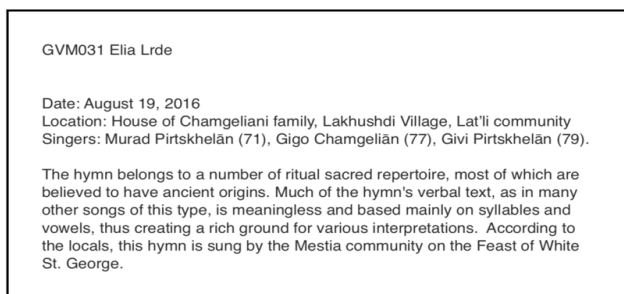


Figure 10 Meta information window for the song “Elia Lrde”.

¹⁴ https://www.audiolabs-erlangen.de/resources/MIR/GVMPlayer/MID_0.html [accessed, October 20, 2022]

4. Teaching/Learning Scenario

Although originally designed for accessing the GVM dataset (Scherbaum et al. 2019), the GVM Interface has also turned out to be very useful for the generation of powerful internet-based teaching/learning scenarios. During the lockdown phase of the COVID pandemic, Nana Mzhavanadze, who, besides being an ethnomusicologist, is a professional singer and experienced teacher of traditional Georgian vocal music, was forced (like many of her colleagues) to abandon her traditional ways of face-to-face teaching. Inspired by Artem Erkomaishvili’s 1966 State Conservatoire recordings, we tried to cope with this situation by extending the overdubbing technique used in 1966 from audio to audiovisual recordings and to exploit the capabilities of the GVM player. Instead of several tape recorders as in 1966, several instances of the freely available QuickTime video player were used. After Nana had recorded the first voice through her computer’s microphone and video camera, the recording was played back to her over headphones, using one instance of the video player. She then recorded the second voice (video and audio) with a second instance of the player. This procedure was then repeated for the third voice. The three videos were then synchronized to a common time code and cut to a common length. Subsequently, the audio tracks were analyzed in the same way as the recordings in the GVM dataset, in this case by using the Tony software to produce pitch and note tracks and to annotate the lyrics. From the annotated note tracks, the subtitle files were calculated and subsequently added to the videos. The resulting video and audio tracks were finally made accessible through the GVM player. A screen image for an example of this scenario is shown in Fig. 11.

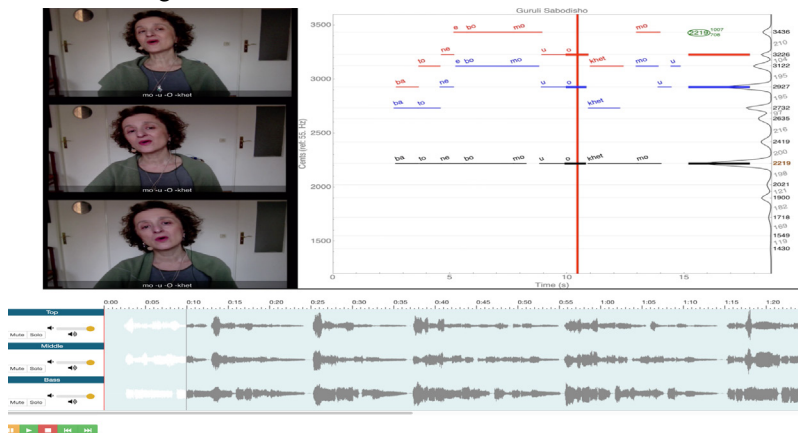


Figure 11 Nana Mzhavanadze singing a single-singer version of “Guruli Sabodisho” as a potential teaching scenario.¹⁵

As a result, students were able to sing along to selected individual voices and/or virtual ensembles for which the volumes of the individual voices could be interactively controlled in real-time while simultaneously watching the videos of the teacher and reading the lyrics of the songs as subtitles.

¹⁵ https://www.audiolabs-erlangen.de/resources/MIR/GVMPlayer/MID_0.html [accessed, October 20, 2022]

5. Discussion

In the current study we have taken a computational perspective on ethnomusicology to explore new ways of representing traditional Georgian vocal music for preservation, documentation, analysis, and educational purposes. The goal of this exercise was not to come up with finished products but to explore the potential of modern state-of-the-art computational tools to process, analyze, and present a recent collection of multimedia field recordings, while identifying existing technical and conceptual challenges. We believe that the presented examples demonstrate for once that the advent of the internet and today's easy access to web-based audiovisual representations and computational tools can have enormous benefits for the analysis, documentation, and preservation of non-western oral music traditions, in particular when ethnomusicological field expeditions aim to extend their recording setup to multimedia and multichannel recordings which would include conventional audio, video, and larynx microphones (for analysis purposes). The recent study by (Scherbaum & Müller, 2023) also illustrates the benefit of studying the interaction between singers using additional heartbeat sensors.

We also believe that computational tools have matured enough to help overcome the problems related to the representation of non-tempered traditional Georgian vocal music by simply using static Western 5-line staff notation. This notation is based on the assumption of a 12-tone equal-temperament (12-TET) tuning system which is inappropriate for representing the non-tempered tuning systems used by many traditional Georgian singers. The way we have tried to address this problem (see e.g., in Fig. 3, 4 and 8) should be seen only as a first step and a proof-of-concept of what may be done. Finally, it needs to be emphasized that in the present paper we completely omitted the discussion of the underlying preprocessing workflow. Computational analysis of modern multimedia multichannel field recordings still faces considerable procedural challenges in terms of being very labor-intensive. For that reason, we have restricted the number of analyzed songs in the present study to only five. Some of the processing issues are addressed in (Rosenzweig et al., 2022; Scherbaum et al. 2022). One of the most time-consuming open issues is currently the determination of the song lyrics and the association with note objects. In summary, the design goal for the GVM player was to allow users to immerse as deeply as possible into the rich polyphonic (non-tempered) soundscape of traditional Georgian singing, using state-of-the-art computer tools.

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**TONY VS CLASSICAL TRANSCRIPTION – THE “CHEKASIO RAMSA”
DILEMMA (WHAT DO COMPUTERS “HEAR” AND WHAT HAS
COMPUTATIONAL ETHNOMUSICOLOGY TAUGHT ME?)**

Preface

I met Frank Scherbaum at a workshop in the summer of 2014 in Hamburg. During a break he introduced himself and told me that he was a geophysicist by profession, although because of a love for and fascination with music, he had also done a course in music theory. Not too long ago he had heard some Georgian singing and afterwards a desire arose within him to study and research it. He had developed an interest in the peculiarities of the Georgian modal system and asked me some questions in the hope and expectation that I would sate his curiosity.

Unfortunately, despite having considerable knowledge of Georgian folk music and practical experience, I was not so well versed in the details associated with the modes and tuning of Georgian singing, therefore I had difficulty even understanding Frank’s questions. I honestly told him that I did not understand many things regarding these questions and would not be an appropriate person to answer them. Still, I promised to assist him there in a meeting with Georgian specialists researching the tuning of Georgian music and offer help in accessing the needed material. Right there he decided that he would absolutely come for a visit and test out some larynx microphones, which, as he affirmed, would ensure a recording quality suitable for acoustic pitch analysis, because the fate of unraveling Georgian music’s modal turning was hinged on his results.

Frank came to Georgia in the summer of the same year with compact, yet complex multimedia equipment and did a few field test recordings in Zemo Svaneti as well. This was followed by a larger-scale expedition in the summer of the next year. Later, however, our collaboration pressed on in an interdisciplinary project dedicated to a computational study of the previously mentioned field recordings (c.f. project website¹ and Scherbaum et al., 2023).

Thus began my exposure to computational ethnomusicology, which I knew nothing about. Still, I saw that the distrust towards computational capacities in musicological studies was founded only on sentiments. I frequently heard, “How can a computer hear better than a person? How can the essence of Georgian singing be determined by computers? Understanding this requires Georgian musical thought”, etc. I was not competent in responding to these things and only made use of counterquestions: Aren’t the rules dictated to a computer by humans? It’s true that humans have no wings, but didn’t they manage and [now] fly around in contraptions they have created? Haven’t dead languages been brought back to life

¹ The 3-year project was implemented through the support of the German Research Council and direction of Frank Scherbaum in collaboration with Potsdam (the Geophysics Institute) and Erlangen (AudioLabs) Universities (see <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/de/soundscapelab/>)

by people? Such an attitude enabled me to grasp something previously unknown and complex, and this process, although it is tiring, turned out to be fascinating.

Below, I will tell you about the path I needed to traverse to get better acquainted with computational ethnomusicology. I will share with you how the collaboration with Frank helped me in doing my own research tasks, how I was sometimes forced to leave my comfort zone, and how computers finally earned my trust.

Introduction

After Georgian polyphony was included on the list of world monuments of intangible culture (2001), interest in the scientific study of Georgian singing increased. Still, the foundations for the study of Georgian vocal polyphony, which due to its diversity was imaginatively called “an island of traditional polyphonic treasure”, by Izaly Zemtsovsky (Zemtsovsky, 2010: 254), were laid much earlier at the beginning of the last century. The research topics were just as diverse and covered such issues as mode, harmony, melody, rhythm, form, genre, etc.

The research material, the analysis of which took place via classical musicological methods, was represented by notated transcriptions of audio recordings done in the field. Gradually, the accumulation and theorizing of Georgian ethnomusicological knowledge began, and the foundations were laid for some fundamental studies, which apart from their historical importance, have not lost any academic value to this day. The first hypotheses appeared in works by Dimitri Arakishvili (1925, 1940, 1954), Shalva Aslanishvili (1954–56, 1970), Grigol Chkhikvadze (1948), and others, which were saturated with observations and thoughts concerning the genesis of Georgian polyphony and its musical peculiarities. Practically all the fundamental problems of Georgian singing were put forward by theoreticians of the first generation and the process of elucidating and investigating them continues to this day.

The importance of field work in the methodological chain of studying folk singing for Georgian scholars was evident right away, and accordingly, even today Georgian ethnomusicologists pursue field work or make use of archival recordings, a significant part of which is (or had been for some time) housed at Tbilisi State Conservatoire and the Folklore State Center of Georgia.

Despite this, many problems become evident during the research process, which are reflected in the findings, and which frequently, on one hand, are connected to the usefulness of the study material for academic goals, and on the other, the availability and selection of field instruments and methods. These things are given decisive importance for the analysis of certain musicological aspects.

As it was pointed out, one of the primary instruments for studying traditional music repertoire is represented by notated copies of audio material. Still, people first began to dwell upon the unreliability of notated versions, when it was discovered that versions of a song performed by South African bushmen to the accompaniment of a bowed instrument notated by four prominent ethnomusicologists were astonishingly different from each other (Rice, 2014: 22).

Notated versions of Georgian archival phonograph recordings are also full of such discrepancies. The “retranslation” of original audio material is frequently hampered by the low audio quality of these recordings and their fragmentary nature caused by being damaged over time. On the other hand, the

recording equipment of that time (phonographs, tape recorders) did not provide any means of making quality (in the modern sense) audio recordings.² Even if not for this, the human factor determining the high quality of subjectivity while interpreting recordings is always pertinent.³

Apart from this, the manual processing of extensive amounts of information represents another problem for ethnomusicological studies. However conscientious and motivated a researcher may be, it is impossible to analyze an immense corpus of material through manual methods. The study of large volume sources, however, is especially important for generalizing and classifying musical characteristics.

With the aim of weeding out the aforementioned shortcomings of research methods and acquiring recordings suitable for maximally accessible analyses, a field expedition was conducted in 2016 in Zemo Svaneti, and partially in Guria, Zemo Racha, and eco-migrant Svan settlements near Tbilisi, through the initiative and leadership of Frank Scherbaum using multimedia equipment (audio-video and larynx microphones). The recording metadata (interviews, material descriptions) was uploaded to the University of Jena's electronic archive⁴ with a listing of photo, audio, and video materials, whereas we held a presentation about the archive in the form of a paper at the IX International Symposium for Polyphony Studies (Scherbaum, Mzhavanadze and Dadunashvili, 2018).

In 2019, however, the implementation of a new idea began, which envisioned an interdisciplinary study (computational and ethnomusicological) of material, specifically the Svan corpus, recorded using innovative methods (throat microphones) in 2015–2016.



2015-2016 field expedition in Upper Svaneti, eco-migrant Svan villages, Upper Racha and Guria. Photo by Frank Scherbaum.

² Field material from the years 2007, 2009, and 2012 belonging to the Folklore State Center of Georgia is exceptional from this standpoint (dir. Natalia Zumbadze), which was recorded with individual microphones via a multitrack recording studio (<http://folk.gov.ge/category/media/expedition/>).

³ Despite this, the historical and practical importance of archival recordings is undisputed, because it's true they might not always be suitable for research purposes, yet from the standpoint of reviving and saving performance and forgotten repertoires, they represent a precious source.

⁴ <https://lazardb.gbv.de/detail/11357>

The study findings, which were preceded by a quite complex work process full of obstacles, turned out to be significantly tangible. Several of our joint works have already been published as conference papers and academic articles (2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2023).

Apart from my own ethnomusicological, practical singing, or general musical experience in this process, I needed to search out many new things and information, acquire knowledge, and exert much effort in assimilating previously foreign skills and abilities to effectively combine these two seemingly opposite (computational and ethnomusicological) disciplines, methods, and approaches, and for the multidisciplinary (complex) study to be substantial and productive. I will deal with the most tangible aspects of these challenges in a general manner, introduce you to the Svan zar funeral dirge case-study, and share with you the response to the newest challenges as much as I can.

1. The First Steps and Preconditions

1.1 Field Work.

I first experienced unexpected defeat and disappointment when I was interpreting a meeting with Frank Scherbaum and Malkhaz Erkvanidze and discovered that I didn’t understand a thing. A second time, I attended Frank’s presentation on the computational study of Georgian singing, although the graphic images displayed on the monitor – diagrams, pictograms, numbers, and formulas – told me nothing. Even the terminology through which Frank shared his own methods and observations with us were incomprehensible: the Markov model, Gaussian mixture distribution, median values, standard deviation, larynx microphones, etc.

Despite this, Frank’s unflagging interest in Georgian music became a guarantee for subsequent meetings, and the business relationship between us, which at first primarily dealt with the problems of the modal system of Georgian singing, endured. I gradually became more active in discussions and shared my own practical experience, ethnomusicological knowledge, and observations with Frank. During such mutual exchange processes, this previously completely foreign terminology was slowly translated into the musicological language I knew, acquired meaning, and bound into substantial phrases.

As a result, the first pilot field recordings were carried out in Upper Svaneti in 2015 using an innovative method, throat microphones, which until then had never been used for ethnomusicological purposes. The effectiveness of this method was confirmed by an initial analysis of the recordings. Despite their low aesthetic value (not usable for official releases), such recordings as these represent precious material for acoustical analysis because of several qualities. First of all, by using the throat microphones (larynx microphones), it was possible to document (recording on an audio medium) each voice during a joint musicmaking process within a natural setting maximally free of distortion. Moreover, all information of essential importance regarding such pitch parameters as height, timbre, voice intensity, and duration are reflected in detail in a recording, providing the means of making thoroughly exact models of them.

The test recordings were followed by a valuable (two-month) expedition in 2016 using the same method (multimedia, audio, video, and throat microphones).⁵ During the recording process, my function

⁵ The recording collection consists of works/variants of traditional Georgian singing, prayers, and laments – 120 units in all.

was represented by the collection of metadata through interviews and observing and describing the ritual or other informal (meetings) settings and contexts.

After being processed, the material accumulated through such a complex method was uploaded on the University of Jena electronic archive through the efforts of Elguja Dadunashvili, a scientist and employee of the same university, and was accompanied by a 60-page document containing information about each recording and a compressed version of the metadata in chronological order (performance date of recording).⁶



2016 field expedition. Village Ghebi. Upper Racha. Photo by Frank Scherbaum.

Later, as previously noted, the implementation of the joint German-Georgian research project began, which envisioned a computational analysis of the field recording collection acquired by us. Thus, we commenced with the next stage of computational (ethnomusicological) research. Before then, my analysis methods were only associated with the manual processing of notated song transcriptions through my own aural impressions/perceptions.

1.2. Classical notation, manual analysis.

When working on my dissertation devoted to Svan singing, the primary research method was represented by a musicological analysis of the audio material notated by me, as well as of notated published or manuscript transcriptions. My work desk gradually filled up with music notebooks, in which due to the amount of data and lack of time, I had copied the heard material in shorthand and oftentimes in a script decipherable only to me.

In tandem with this, I got to know the extant score collections, the analysis of which involved a comparison of transcriptions to audio archival recordings and revealed that the notated versions differed significantly from the audio originals and did not always thoroughly reflect just the pitch height charac-

⁶ It must be noted that it was critically important for us that the archive, on one hand, be viable for the long-term and widely accessible for research or practical use.

teristics of songs, but also their metric and rhythmic appearances.⁷

The comparison of notated transcriptions done by various recorders of the same work turned out to be exceptionally interesting. For example, in the notated versions of the Svan round dance song “Chekasio ramsa”, one specific tone of its entire pitch set was interpreted differently. It seems while recording this pitch, the authors were faced with a dilemma (we can conditionally call this phenomenon the “Chekasio ramsa dilemma”) and a final decision was made based on their own tastes. Such an observation gave me the means of showing comparatively fixed (notated the same way by recorders) and variable (notated differently) pitches within the work, supposedly representing this song’s scale and therefore, the framework of its modal system.

ჩანწერის ადგილი	ჩანწერის თარიღი	ჩამწერი/ნოტირების ავტორი	ბგერათრიგი	შენიშვნა
ხე	1950	ვ. ახოზაძე	ფა# - მი - რე - დო# - სი - ლა - სოლ (fis-e-d-cis-h-a-g)	საყრდენი: „სი“
კალა	1950	ვ. ახოზაძე	ფა# - მი - რე - დო# - სი - ლა - სოლ (fis-e-d-cis-h-a-g)	იფენდურია ხე-ში ჩანწერილი ვარიანტისა. საყრდენი: „სი“
ქვემო სვანეთი	1954	დ. თორაძემ. მ. მლორავა	ფა - მი - რე - დო# - დო# - სი - სი ბ - ლა - სოლ - ფა (f- e-d-cis-c(♯)-h-b-a-g-f)	საყრდენი: ლა, სი ♯ ივლება სი ბ -ით კვარტკინტაკორდის წარმოებისას.
უცნობია	1955	ვ. მახარაძე (ი. ფალიანის მიერ გადმოცემული)	მი ბ - რე - დო - სი ბ - ლა - ლა ბ - სოლ - ფა - მი ბ (es-d-c-b-a-as- g-f-es)	საყრდენი: სოლ, ლა ივლება ლა ბ -ით კვარტკინტაკორდის წარმოებისას.
-----	1976	ი. ფილფანი	მი - რე - დო - სი - სი ბ - ლა - სოლ - ფა (e-d-c-h-b-a-g-f)	საყრდენი: ლა, სი სი ბ -ით ივლება კვარტკინტაკორდის წარმოებისას.
ლენტი სანამბლი	1985	ჩვენ მიერ ნოტირებული	მი - რე - დო - სი ბ - ლა - სოლ - ფა (e-d-c-b-a-g-f)	საყრდენი: ლა.
ლატალი	2016	ჩვენ მიერ ნოტირებული (ს. წერდიანის მიერ გადმოცემული)	მი - რე - დო - სი - სი ბ - ლა - სოლ - ფა (e-d-c-h-b-a-g-f).	საყრდენი: ლა, სი ივლება სი ბ -ით კვარტკინტაკორდის წარმოებისას.
ლატალი	2017	ჩვენ მიერ ნოტირებული (მ. ფორცხელანის მიერ გადმოცემული)	მი - რე - დო - სი - სი ბ - ლა - სოლ - ფა (e-d-c-h-b-a-g-f)	საყრდენი: ლა, სი ივლება სი ბ -ით კვარტკინტაკორდის წარმოებისას.

"Chekasio Ramsa". Variants of the scale sound according to
 a comparative analysis of the archival and notated by Mzhavandze versions.

Apart from this, I had to do a structural analysis using a manual method; I looked for and sorted motifs, phrases, intervals, began to group and classify them. I verbally described the process, whereas I used minimal forms, primarily notated examples, to visualize and represent the findings.

⁷ The diversity of rhythmic pictures turned out to be especially intriguing (an aurally perceived rhythm differed from the notated transcription), different rhythmic versions of the same work attest the high degree of subjective factors during the process of notational transcription.

An analysis of the findings provided the means of making some new hypotheses and deductions, including in regard to one of the most crucial research problems such as the issue of the origins of Georgian polyphony. In particular, the musicological and empirical analysis of the Svan zar made me think that its polyphony comes naturally and in no way could be explained through the evolutionary (a gradual crossover from monody to polyphony) theories of the origins of polyphony.

Even more, according to observations of the harmonic structure and other parameters of the zar (tempo, rhythm), we can surmise that its harmonic fabric (and of Svan songs with hymnodic structures) represents a realization of the overtone pitch spectrum. The melody or leading tune of a Svan hymn song is created by the unity of all three voices, the entire harmonic fabric, and not by any specific, separate voice.

The reasoning and visualization of the proposed hypothesis again consisted of discussion and notated examples. Therefore, the inclusion of new observations in the study of Svan music using modern, computational, much more objective and broader technological and intellectual resources and methods pictured a perspective of producing new analyses. Apart from this, I was given the means of checking the obtained findings and hypotheses by using the classical musicological methods from before. Still, this stage of the study turned out to have double the weight, because in parallel with the ethnomusicological research work (implying the processing of musicological and ethnomusicological literature, reviewing it, accumulating more information, and summarizing it), there was the need to become better versed in the new sphere of computational ethnomusicology and acquire elementary knowledge and skills in acoustics, computational methods, etc.

2. The Computational Image of Music (Abstracted/Modeled).

Computational Analysis and Interpretation

2.1 Tony in place of notes – a new type of transcription (visualization/sonification).

As noted previously, in order to research modal structures and the scales originating from them, notated transcriptions of audio material are principally useless, because an analysis and specification of the acoustic parameters are needed, this however is possible through the appropriate specific methods and instruments. Apart from this, showing acoustical or musicological characteristics and publicizing the findings in general demand that as much material as possible be examined, which represents an extremely difficult (even impossible) task using manual methods.

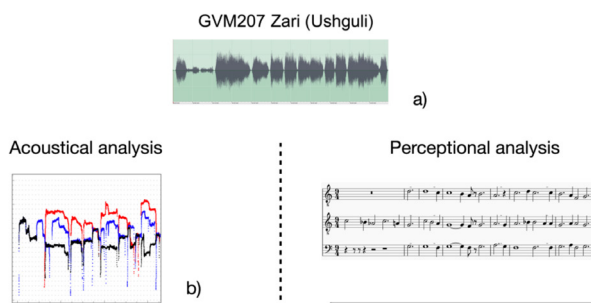
Within the framework of our project (Computational Analysis of Traditional Georgian Vocal Music), the Svan zar funeral dirge was selected as the study focus and we planned a holistic analysis of all its aspects. One of the leading issues of the research topics was determining the melodic and harmonic intervallic funds of the zar variants (11 different recordings of 5 variants) recorded by us using throat microphones and identifying the scale (modal structure foundation – the basis of Svan musical thought).

I had to get familiarized with the elementary foundations of acoustical science in order to make a contribution to the study. During this process, I became aware of the complex nature of a musical pitch as, on one hand, an objective, or physical (acoustical) phenomenon, and on the other, of its subjective, or psychoneurological (perceptual) category, and the necessity of considering this when solving (musicological) research puzzles (intervals, scale structures, etc.). I began to delve into elementary terminology

and found out that hertz express the meanings of the physical parameters (acoustical) of individual pitches, whereas cents reference intervallic values (between two pitches). I realized that it’s true a musical impression is the psychoneurological (or subjective) response to what we hear, but to identify the acoustic characteristics of music’s modal structure, precise data requiring the most refined and experience acoustical methods/instruments is needed.

This is why we made use of the Tony⁸ program in the research project for such an analysis as one of the newest, authoritative tools at this stage for transcribing melodies, through which all of the characteristics of each of the three zar voices would be reflected without any loss in sound quality, being a necessity for acoustical analysis.

Apart from musical parameters, Tony provides the means for annotating song texts as well, ensuring the synchronized playback and visualization of musical pitches and texts, and enabling us to study phonetic peculiarities apart from the musicological characteristics (Scherbaum and Mzhavanadze, 2021c).



Transcriptions of a fragment of the Ushgul "Zari" recording: a) in the European five-line system; b) in the TONY computer program. (The material is taken from the article published in the "Musicologist" (Mzhanadze, Sherbaum, 2020:172).

2.3. Acoustical study findings and visualizations.

Since one of my obligations was the transcription of the zar in Tony, I set out to annotate it and correct errors. A recording acquired by an automatic transcription method needs to be checked, because it is possible for the program to mark some frequency of the overtone series in place of a primary pitch or consider an extraneous voice or sound as a pitch. In the end, all examples of the zar were converted within Tony, the rhythmic pulsations were defined, texts were added, and the recordings were prepared to be processed through the computational method.

In tandem with the computational analysis, determining the important and less important aspects, grouping and examining them, putting forth some hypotheses, and formulating the research questions intended for the computer took place while discussing the zar. Based on this, the appropriate algorithms were coded by Frank to work out certain problems, he processed the data obtained from analyses, gave

⁸ By using Tony it is possible to a. define/establish/ calculate the height of a pitch or note; b. find/identify visual and audio feedback errors; c. a “smart” graphic interface through which a user can correct errors/mistakes; d. a wide range of export functions providing the means of using and processing files in other applications (Mauch et. al., 2015).

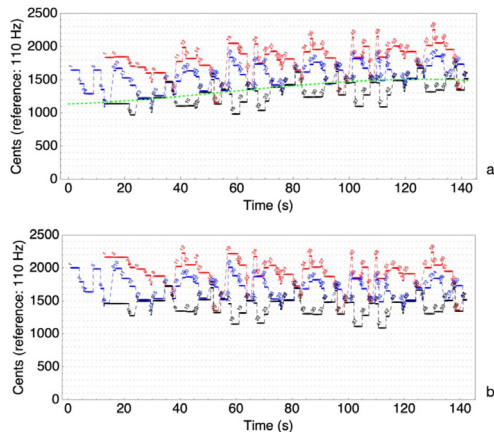
it a graphical representation, and graphically modeled the musical body of the zar using various, distinct visualized forms (histograms, diagrams, spectrograms, etc.).

Since my role was not as a technical assistant, I had trouble getting to know the basics of the computational method, resulting in me beginning to gradually decipher and understand the presented graphical content through Frank, thereby helping me in discussing and interpreting the findings.

Through this method, it finally became possible to identify the musical language, acoustical properties, and melodic and harmonic funds of the zar, and solve some of the problems (when using classical musicological methods) which before could not be managed.

In this aspect, there is a distinct problem associated with changes caused by the gradual rising of the pitch while singing, which is commonly characteristic of vocal folk musicmaking. Svan singing is no exception, and this is seen even better in the zar examples, in the recordings of which the amplitude of raising the pitch fluctuates between a second and a fifth with various performers. The transcription of such recordings into notation is itself a difficult process, but such a notated example is useless for analysis without any corrections.

Despite this, in order to solve the problem, however paradoxical it might sound, we actually used a notation method based on aural impressions (perceptions). I copied one example of the zar into notation automatically corrected through listening (without any height changes in the tonic), which differed from the true sound. All the zar recordings were corrected by Frank according to such an adapted work and using a mathematical method. This simplified the analysis process and made its findings reliable. My earlier hypothesis concerning the zar as a naturally occurring three-voice musical event was corroborated through these findings, and the supposition regarding the fifth and fourth as intervallic frameworks for constructing verticals was reinforced.⁹ (Scherbaum and Mzhavanadze, 2020a; Mzhavanadze and Scherbaum, 2020b)



Correction of the gradually raised tone in the "Zari" using computer (mathematical) methods.

(The material is taken from the article published in the "Musicologist"

(Mzhavanadze, Sherbaum, 2020:158)

⁹ Solid forms of harmonic seconds, fourths, and fifths were identified through the computational analysis of the zar's melodic and harmonic intervallic fund when melodic seconds are fluctuating and unstable.

3. The Human Factor. New Challenges

3.1. Computers and humans together.

In his popular article on computational ethnomusicology, journalist Leon Neyfakh defines the essence of the latter as “turning music into data – and uncovering truths beyond human ears”. Despite this metaphor having a kind of marketing ring to it, it clearly reflects the importance of computational musicology, because truly, despite its great potential, there are things lying hidden beyond the human ear. Still, a human’s role in identifying these hidden things is important, which is better evident in one of the later definitions of computational ethnomusicology, according to which the purpose of this new field “is represented by the design, elaboration, and use of computational tools to assist ethnomusicological research”. (Tzanetakis et al., 2007).

Truly, a human is assisted by computational methods to conduct research better and more qualitatively. The human factor (despite them teaching the computer, with the computer fulfilling what is indicated by them) is given an important role at every stage of ethnomusicological research – beginning with field work and ending with defining research problems, choosing methods, or interpreting analysis results.

One of the leading activities in the field is accumulating metadata through interviews and a person can (hypothetically) never be replaced by a computer (robot). Establishing emotional connections with tradition bearers, earning their trust, choosing the right questions or spontaneous conversations, situational awareness (analysis), and so on, are based on psycho-emotional factors, and computers are useless in these endeavors. As it was pointed out, our 2016 field expedition material is replete with such accounts (interviews, observations), on the basis of which we composed an extensive document and appended it to archival recordings.

Still, we did not use the processing of metadata to just collect and put it into one document, or to just supplement information about a situation/event and simply describe it. For us, it was important to examine and summarize this data, and take it into account when planning a computational analysis, as well as when interpreting the findings and making some deductions.

To illustrate this, I will cite a couple of examples. When talking with Ruben Charkviani, a master of Svan singing, the host remarked that while listening to a Georgian song performed by foreigners, he’s left with such an impression that all they want to do is get to the end of it. It seems like an insignificant observation, but simultaneously suggestive, because there is a basis for supposing that this might be due to the foreigners’ different musical experience and their melodic, musical thought process. It is something to ponder that for them, the melodic line has priority, and the task is “traversing” this line correctly and reaching the end. The notice of this by Ruben and his remark indicate how strange such musicmaking is to him, urging us on to focus more on harmonic verticals and identifying their role and function.

Apart from this, practical knowledge of and empirical experience with the music being studied is important for computational analyses, because only a human can teach a computer and mark musical phrases, motifs, melodic formulas, cadential structures, deviations or modulations, and rhythmic models for it, define metric accents, etc.

During such detailed musicological research, the importance of showing such properties of pitches, such as, for example, tonal hierarchy (the importance of individual scale steps) grows even more, which is delegated a decisive role in studying modal aspects. As defined by Krumnhansl and Cuddy (2010), tonal hierarchy is not only a theoretical concept implying a description of a structural composition, but also a purely empirical phenomenon. This is the empirical knowledge and experience you can share with (teach) a computer, which will assist us in defining and visualizing/representing the modal (tonal) hierarchy of a scale.

3.2. The Response to New Challenges – A New Study Interface.

My professional life, apart from research, also involves practical, pedagogical work, which primarily implies teaching Georgian singing to foreigners, due to which I have frequently had to spend a lot of time abroad. Yet, many things were altered by the pandemic, and as it is known, not only has the number of virtual meetings increased, but in many realms, real personal and business relationships have been totally replaced by this.

In wake of this challenge, some foreign friends (students) of mine who admire Georgian singing contacted me and asked that I conduct online lessons (like many of my colleagues). At first, I hesitated, because I thought that online meetings for teaching and studying the Georgian polyphonic repertoire, would in the best case be dull and boring, and in the worst case, be useless work and wasted time and financial resources. Still, challenges spur you on to find a solution and thus, an idea was worked out for an online teaching method.

The method’s principle is represented through a complex approach and its goal is to model the audio and video of a song in such a way that a listener can study it without a mentor (teacher). In particular: listening to a song, controlling, and manipulating individual voices (turning up one voice and turning down or muting the others as needed), annotation of the text, and synchronous visualization (when each pitch is followed by the corresponding syllable in parallel with the sound). Those wishing to do so are simultaneously given the means of watching the movement of each voice melody through dynamic “pseudo-notation”¹⁰ and “seeing” a pitch via a spectrogram. This complex study interface was created through the efforts of Frank Scherbaum, and I think it will be extremely useful for practical purposes (Scherbaum et. al., 2022).

Since learning and using such a complex mechanism went beyond my abilities, after returning to Georgia I needed to adapt and simplify it, and the curriculum material compiled by me consisted of video recordings (with annotated texts and subtitles) accompanied by exhaustive information (with photo material and audio-video links) about the song being learned. Despite the comparatively meager capabilities, the method turned out to be quite effective and friends satisfied with the results sent me recordings

¹⁰ A graphical depiction of the pitches showing them synchronously in real time (in moving mode) and drawing out the height indicators of each sounding pitch.

of learned songs performed by a virtual trio, in which they sang one of the voices themselves and I performed the other two.

Despite the Covid era having ended and my pedagogical activities returning to the pre-pandemic regime, students sometimes contact me even today and again ask me to send a study “packet” for learning some songs.

4. Summary. What did a computer teach me and what does it have to learn itself?

As evident from the aforementioned, I have been taught and shown many things through computational ethnomusicology that a computer can help us in solving problems of such ethnomusicological and practical implications which are difficult or unachievable through traditional (musicological) methods. The rich resource of a computer provides the ability – a. to maximally process and analyze, and b. visualize (audio recordings, the analysis process, and results) a large amount of research materials.

Here, the innovative method of documenting the research material must be noted, which implies recording a polyphonic song in the field using individual larynx microphones. Due to their specific properties, recording quality is significantly increased for use in acoustical research.

The effectiveness of computational methods in relation to processing, analyzing, and visualizing the results has been confirmed within our interdisciplinary project devoted to the study of field material recorded through an innovative technique. This study’s focus was the Svan zar funeral dirge and its musical language, including one of the most fundamental subjects of Georgian ethnomusicological interest, the modal structure, and scale it is based on.¹¹ Exceptional activity and fervent studies of the Svan zar began at the end of the 20th century and debates concerning it are ongoing to this day. On the basis of individual examples of the zar, as well as of a comparative analysis of them through the newest computational methods, it became possible to identify its modal structure, scalar framework, and intervallic fund (melodic and harmonic), and work out the foundations of its musical “grammar”. In this aspect, notating the research material in a computer program (Tony) instead of transcribing it played a large role, because notated copies of audio recordings are practically useless for doing a high-quality acoustical analysis.¹²

One of the most noticeable advantages of the computational method turned out to be the resource of processing an undefined amount of research material. Apart from moving the qualitative properties over into the quantitative, which immeasurably increases the quality of objective argumentation, the computational method provides the means of doing comparative analyses (based on the results of analyzing a large volume of material), classification, and generalization, thereby further increasing the trustworthiness of the study’s findings.

Moreover, however methodologically correct a study is conducted, effective visualization is needed to show the findings and bring them before readers or an audience, something verbal discussions and descriptions cannot replace. A computational visualization (diagrams, histograms, etc.) of the audio in-

¹¹ There was interest in the problem of Georgian modal structures even during the first stage of Georgian song research. The history of the study of Georgian musical structure, beginning from the first half of the 20th century to the present, by Georgian and foreign scholars is reviewed and summarized by Joseph Jordania in his article regarding this issue. (Jordania, 2022)

¹² You can see details and findings of the multilayered analysis of the zar in 4 mutually connected studies published in the journal *MusicoLOGY* (2020a, 2020b, 2021b, 2021c).

formation and analysis results helps to “see” something heard, and in case of knowing the appropriate lingo, makes it simple to perceive and grasp for listeners and readers.

The great advantage of visualizing audio-video recordings through computational methods in comparison to notated transcriptions is well apparent in the companion article to this essay, especially within a context of their usage for educational purposes (Scherbaum et. al., 2022). The computer interface, which implies a visualization maximally resembling an audio source, displays the acoustical and contextual data of a recording without any distortion. In particular, the transmission of complex information – the acoustical properties of a pitch, meter and rhythm, text, etc. – happens in sync (in real time) with the audio signal. Apart from this, such an interface as this is also accessible online.

Despite the wide possibilities, there are still many challenges that need to be overcome, with this being crucial for the study of Georgian polyphonic music, and because of this, computers must “learn” and “understand” a lot more. Out of these challenges, the problem of the computational analysis of old (archival) recordings has especial significance. For the time being, separating and processing the voices in such recordings so that it might be possible to do a high-quality acoustical analysis of each voice is not feasible. This problem is certainly pertinent for the study of the Georgian musical repertoire because the rich archival material has great potential for retrospective, comparative musicological studies.

The key thing is that a synergy of computational and human resources is important to achieve the best results possible. We were facilitated in transforming into objective data, correcting, and clarifying subjective impressions and observations through computational methods during our interdisciplinary study. On the other hand, without any practical proficiency and experience, music would regain its former status as a category of human auditory perception (*Musica Sonora*), through which it would be assigned a place beside the purely theoretical sciences – arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy (*Quadrivium*) (Krestef, 1962).

Finally, the fate of subsequent studies of Georgian singing is stipulated by such interdisciplinary collaboration. Based on our experience, it can confidently be said that the maximal usage of computational resources by young scholars, future generations, will guarantee the rapid solution of many problems associated with Georgian polyphony.

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